NOVELTY, INNOVATION AND TRANSFORMATION IN EDUCATIONAL ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES

Edited by
Jürgen Budde, Anke Wischmann,
Georg Rißler and Michael Meier-Sternberg

Novelty, Innovation and Transformation in Educational Ethnographic Research

This edited volume tackles the theoretical, empirical and methodological questions of how novelty can be determined in and through educational ethnographic research.

Responding to the increasing need for new and innovative methodological and theoretical foundations for the field, chapters draw on a variety of empirical, critically examined data sets such as observation protocols of pedagogical practice, digital communication and visual representations to bridge the gap between empirical and theoretical approaches, ultimately combining different traditions and discourses within educational ethnography. Collating perspectives and accounts from over 30 authors based in European centers of excellence such as Germany, the Czech Republic, Switzerland, Italy, Austria and Denmark, the book provides an epistemological reflection on what we can understand as 'new' in theoretical and methodological research.

This volume will be of use to researchers, academics and postgraduate students involved with research methods in education, ethnography and the theory of education more broadly. Those involved with research design, innovation and European research methods will also find the volume of use.

Jürgen Budde is Professor of Educational Science, Institute of Educational Science, Europa-Universität Flensburg, Germany.

Anke Wischmann is Professor of Educational Science, Institute of Educational Science, Europa-Universität Flensburg, Germany.

Georg Rißler is a scientific assistant, Centre for Childhood in Education and Society, University of Teacher Education, Zurich, Switzerland.

Michael Meier-Sternberg is Lecturer in Education, Institute of Educational Science, Europa-Universität Flensburg, Germany.

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

Novelty, Innovation and Transformation in Educational Ethnographic Research

European Perspectives

Edited by Jürgen Budde, Anke Wischmann, Georg Rißler and Michael Meier-Sternberg

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2025

by Routledge
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2025 selection and editorial matter, Jürgen Budde, Anke Wischmann, Georg Rißler and Michael Meier-Sternberg; individual chapters, the contributors

The right of Jürgen Budde, Anke Wischmann, Georg Rißler and Michael Meier-Sternberg to be identified as the authors of the editorial material, and of the authors for their individual chapters, has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

The Open Access version of this book, available at www.taylorfrancis.com, has been made available under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial-No Derivatives (CC-BY-NC-ND) 4.0 license.

Any third party material in this book is not included in the OA Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. Please direct any permissions enquiries to the original rightsholder.

We would like to thank the Europa-Universität Flensburg, the Fördergesellschaft der Uni Flensburg e.v. and the Research Centre for Education, Teaching, School and Socialization for financial support.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-032-61735-0 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-032-62936-0 (pbk)
ISBN: 978-1-032-62938-4 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781032629384

Typeset in ITC Galliard Pro
by Apex CoVantage, LLC

Contents

Editors and Contributors *viii*

Introduction: Novelty, Innovation and Transformation in Educational Ethnographic Research: European Perspectives 1
JÜRGEN BUDDE, ANKE WISCHMANN, GEORG RIẞLER AND MICHAEL MEIER-STERNBERG

PART I
Theoretical Perspectives 11

1 **Introductory Reflections on New Educational Theory Through Ethnography** 13
JÜRGEN BUDDE

2 **Educational Ethnography in an Age of Technoculture: Exploring Noise and Glitch Instead of Fetishising the New** 16
FELICITAS MACGILCHRIST

3 **Rich, Intimate and Immersive: Using Netnography for Educational Research in an Age of Technoculture** 29
ROSSELLA C. GAMBETTI AND ROBERT V. KOZINETS

4 **Old and New Varieties of Materialism in Ethnographic Research: Ethnography Matters** 46
TOBIAS RÖHL

5 **Multispecies Ethnography in Educational Research: Changing Perspective in Animal-Assisted Education** 57
KATHARINA AMELI

6 **Overcoming 'Intellectual Aristocracy' Through Bildung: A New Look at the Work of Wilhelm von Humboldt by Bringing Together the History of Education and the History of Ethnography** 70
RUPRECHT MATTIG

7 **Is Necessity the Mother of Invention? Improvisational Action, Creativity and Art in Times of Crisis (or Crisis of Time)** 81
MARGIT SCHILD

PART II
Methodological Perspectives 99

8 **Introductory Reflections on New Challenges for Ethnographic Research in Educational Practices** 101
GEORG RIßLER

9 **Outline of a New Practice–Theoretical Conception for Ethnographic Research of Larger Nexuses: Constellations Ethnography** 107
JÜRGEN BUDDE, JOHANNA GEßNER-OTT AND GEORG RIßLER

10 **Addressing the Unseen, Challenging Visual Difference: New Perspectives in Ethnographic Research** 120
VALÉRIE RIEPE AND ANKE WISCHMANN

11 **Elaborating New Insights in Transnational Ethnographic Collaborations: Opportunities and Challenges** 135
MAGNUS FRANK, ANJA SIEBER EGGER, GISELA UNTERWEGER, FLORIAN WEITKÄMPER, CLEMENS WIESER AND SUSAN WRIGHT

12 **On the Vulnerability of Epistemological Processes: How Does 'the New' Enter Ethnography?** 152
JULIANE ENGEL, ANKE WISCHMANN, SERAFINA MORRIN, MIRJA SILKENBEUMER AND SASKIA TERSTEGEN

13 **Process Ontologies and the Many Potential Ethnographies: New Materialisms and Shifting Boundaries Between Humans, Animals and Things** 163
GRIT HÖPPNER, CORNELIA SCHADLER AND ANNA WANKA

PART III
Empirical Perspectives 175

14 Introductory Reflections on the New in Empirical Analyses 177
ANKE WISCHMANN

15 Autoethnographic Explorations of (Post-)Socialist Childhood Memories Through Storytelling: Migrating as and With Children 180
IRENA KAŠPAROVÁ AND SUSANNE RESS

16 Children, Belonging and the New: Methodological Perspectives on the Relationship Between Construction and Reconstruction 193
ANJA TERVOOREN AND NICOLLE PFAFF

Conclusion: The 'New' in Ethnography in Times of Crises 210
JÜRGEN BUDDE, MICHAEL MEIER-STERNBERG, GEORG RIßLER AND ANKE WISCHMANN

Index *214*

Editors and Contributors

Katharina Ameli holds a PhD degree in sociology. She is a coordinator at the Interdisciplinary Centre for Animal Welfare Research and 3R at Justus Liebig University Giessen, Germany. Her research focuses on multi-species ethnography, animal-assisted services (animal-assisted therapy, animal-assisted education), human–animal studies and obstetric violence.

Jürgen Budde is Professor at the Institute of Educational Science at the Europa-University Flensburg, Germany. His research focuses on ethnography, practice theory, character education, inequality and inclusion.

Juliane Engel is Professor at the Department for Educational Science at Goethe University, Germany. Her research focuses on planetary education, postdigitality, qualitative inquiry, inequality and subjectivation.

Magnus Frank is a postdoctoral researcher and project leader at the Center for Education, Teaching, School and Socialization (ZeBUSS) at Europa-University Flensburg, Germany. His research focuses on inequality, racism, ethnography and methodological questions in qualitative research.

Rossella C. Gambetti is Professor of Branding and Consumer Culture at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan, Italy. She is an interpretive scholar specialized in netnography whose research focuses on technocultural phenomena that blend consumer culture, branding and social media platforms.

Johanna Geßner-Ott is a research assistant at the Institute for Educational Science at Europa-University Flensburg. Her research focuses on ethnography, practice theory, classroom research, practices of achievement and performance and digital tools in education.

Grit Höppner is Professor at the Department of Social Work at the Catholic University of Applied Sciences Münster, Germany. Her research focuses on material gerontology, new materialisms, gender-based violence and sustainability in later life.

Irena Kašparová is Assistant Professor at Masaryk University Brno, Czech Republic. Her research focuses on qualitative methodology, theories of ethnicity and anthropology of childhood and schooling.

Robert V. Kozinets is a multiple award-winning professional researcher and teacher. He invented and developed the multidisciplinary qualitative digital research method of netnography and has authored, coauthored and edited eight books as well as over 150 articles and chapters. He works at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, California.

Felicitas Macgilchrist is Professor of Digital Education and Schooling at the University of Oldenburg, Germany. Her research explores the cultural politics of educational technology, with a focus on critical, ethnographic and speculative approaches. Felicitas is coeditor of Learning, Media and Technology.

Ruprecht Mattig is Professor of systematic educational studies and methodology of educational research at TU Dortmund University. His research and academic teaching comprise educational anthropology, qualitative educational research, research on rituals and gestures, language and education, Wilhelm von Humboldt studies, global citizenship education, and youth research.

Michael Meier-Sternberg is Lecturer at the Institute for Educational Science at Europa-University Flensburg, Germany. His research focuses on ethnography, methodology, school and teaching research.

Serafina Morrin is Professor at the Catholic University of Applied Social Sciences in Berlin, Germany. Her research focuses on education in childhood, inclusion, heterogeneity and migration as well as drama in education.

Nicolle Pfaff is Professor at the Faculty of Educational Science at the University Duisburg-Essen, Germany. Her research and teaching focus on educational inequality, antidiscriminatory policy at educational institutions, civic education, youth and youth culture.

Susanne Ress is a guest professor at the Chair of Higher Education in the Context of Digital Transformation and Diversity at the Technical University Berlin. Her research focuses on international and comparative, postcolonial, postfoundational, critical black and ethnic studies theories, internationalization of higher education, migration, and education for sustainable development.

Valérie Riepe is a research associate at the Faculty of Art & Design at UE Germany, Campus Hamburg. Her research focuses on the theorization of (in)equality as well as cultural and social theory of body and embodiment, currently concentrating on the visual and aesthetic perspectives on ethnographic field research.

Georg Rißler is affiliated at the Centre for Childhood in Education and Society at the University of Teacher Education in Zurich. His research focuses on practice theory, space and spatiality, inequality, common worlds and ethnography.

Tobias Röhl is Professor of Digital Learning and Teaching at the Centre for Education and Digital Transformation at the Zurich University of Teacher Education. His research interests are (digital) media in education, sociomateriality, practice theory and qualitative methods.

Cornelia Schadler is Senior Lecturer at the Department of Education at the University of Vienna, Austria. She published on new materialist methods, chosen family and publications practices in social sciences.

Margit Schild is an artist, curator, filmmaker and engineer for landscape and open space planning based at Berlin, Germany, and Vancouver, Canada. 'Necessity is the mother of invention' is the guiding principle in her artistic practice, research and teaching, all of which explore the connection between constraints and inspiration, restrictions and ideas.

Anja Sieber Egger is Professor of Educational Anthropology at the 'Childhood in Education and Society' Center at the Zurich University of Teacher Education, Switzerland. Her research interests include childhood studies with perspectives on posthumanist theories, inequality and power relations with a focus on educational ethnography in early childhood settings.

Mirja Silkenbeumer is Professor at the Faculty for Educational Science at Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany. Her research focuses on socialisation, medicalisation of childhood und youth, objective hermeneutics, injustice and inclusion, and data infrastructures for qualitative data.

Saskia Terstegen is a postdoc researcher at the Department of Education at Goethe University Frankfurt am Main, Germany. Her research interests include power, subjectivation and biographies in education; social inequalities and discrimination; and qualitative and poststructuralist methodologies.

Anja Tervooren is Professor at the Institute for Educational Science at the University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany. Her research focuses on theories of difference, childhood studies, ethnography and inclusion.

Gisela Unterweger, PhD, is coleader of the Childhood in Education and Society research centre at the Zurich University of Teacher Education. Her research interests include ethnographic, posthumanist and subjectivization–theoretical approaches to everyday school culture.

Anna Wanka is Research Group Leader at the Institute for Educational Sciences at Goethe University Frankfurt/Main, Germany. Her research focuses on age constructions across the life course, practice theory and new materialisms, and mixed-methods research.

Florian Weitkämper is Assistant Professor at the University of Education Freiburg, Germany. His research covers the areas of qualitative difference, inclusion and inequality research, pedagogical action in social power relations and qualitative social research with a focus on ethnography.

Clemens Wieser is Associate Professor of Educational Theory at the Danish School of Education, Aarhus University, and Link Convenor of the EERA network 19: Ethnography. His research focuses on professional development and pedagogical practice in secondary and higher education.

Anke Wischmann, Professor of Educational Science specializing in empirical educational research at the Educational Research at the European University of Flensburg. Main areas of work include educational and inequality, critical (race) and intersectional educational research and educational research on youth.

Susan Wright is Professor of Educational Anthropology and Codirector of the Centre for Higher Education Futures (CHEF) at the Danish School of Education, Aarhus University. She studies people's participation in large-scale processes of political transformation. Her research focuses on higher education and university reforms, audit culture, governance and the anthropology of policy.

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

Introduction

Novelty, Innovation and Transformation in Educational Ethnographic Research: European Perspectives

Jürgen Budde, Anke Wischmann, Georg Rißler and Michael Meier-Sternberg

A central aim of empirical research is to generate new knowledge and new insights (St. Pierre, 2016). Science in general always involves explaining 'what's new'. This is also true for ethnographic research, not least considering the field's own history of investigating 'the foreign'. Yet even today, the foreign as an 'alienation of one's own perspective' (Hirschauer & Amann, 1997, authors' translation) remains a central aspect of ethnographic research, as well as being a part of the research process even in supposedly familiar contexts, such as schools or peer groups. In light of current social changes brought on by global crisis phenomena such as pressing social and ecological challenges in the new geological epoch of the Anthropocene (Crutzen et al., 2002), the COVID-19 pandemic, war, terror and authoritarian regimes, the question of 'what's new?' remains a constant focus of ethnography as a strategy for educational research.

The issue of how new empirical and theoretical statements emerge, innovate and/or become transformed has generated a number of different answers, depending on the particular theoretical approach (cf., among others, Feyerabend, 1976; Kuhn, 1976, 1977; Popper, 1973). Despite the divergent positions at the philosophy of science level, there is broad consensus within the academic community that scholarly practices both contribute to the transmission of scientific knowledge and are themselves subject to processes of renewal and change. These changes are fuelled by social dynamics and transformations. The questions of what is considered new for whom, from which perspective, to what extent and with which aim have been widely discussed in the past and, more recently, in relation to representations and subalternity, as well as to colonialism and Eurocentrism as central issues of ethnography (Engel et al., 2019; Hopson & Dixson, 2014).

Against this background, ethnographic research relies on a 'hard' empirical and a 'soft' methodological concept (Amann & Hirschauer, 1997; Greed, 1994). With its exploratory research approach (Harrison, 2018) and its strong ethos of discovery, ethnography aims to surprise itself with the data that it produces. As *professional strangers* (Agar, 1980), ethnographers might cultivate a 'nosing around' (Lindner, 1990) and they go 'where the action is' (Goffman, 1967). However, this does not mean that ethnography is only oriented

DOI: 10.4324/9781032629384-1

This chapter has been made available under a (CC-BY-NC-ND) 4.0 license.

towards new phenomena and sees itself as a trendsetter. Rather, the claim of ethnographic research is 'that it has new things to say about the seemingly familiar' (Breidenstein, 2010, p. 207, authors' translation). While standardised quantitative research foregrounds objectivity as a central criterion of quality, the 'gold standard' (Meier & Budde, 2015) of ethnography is to reveal new perspectives on familiar objects. With this background in mind, it seems reasonable to take a closer look at how ethnography relates to its self-formulated claim of discovering novel phenomena in the familiar, the ordinary and the everyday, as well as how it can help clarify the relationship between the persistence and transformation of educational practices from the perspective of educational research.

Ethnographic methods have already had a long tradition in educational research, ranging from the Chicago School, to the studies from the CCCS and to current analyses of interactional practices in educational contexts. In particular, the 'doing paradigm' has proven extremely helpful in determining the connection between ethnography and education. Through ethnography, phenomena such as the *hidden curriculum of the school* or the *wayward practices of teenagers* have been revealed. In this sense, current educational ethnography analyses new phenomena in the education sector, such as the individualisation of learning and digitalisation, as well as emerging inequalities in relation to migration (Wischmann, 2017) or inclusion (Rißler et al., 2023), as indeed the significance of artefacts or animals.

Not only are new phenomena analysed but also change, transformation and the 'new' can be seen as inscribed phenomena in the international ethnography of education itself. However, they are usually neither universal nor linear, nor do they have clearly identifiable breaks, but are instead diverse, fluid and contextual. This is due to the fact that 'practice' as an object–theoretical focus is a multi-layered phenomenon. Determining when a practice is 'new' or to what extent it or what about it is 'new' eludes both an absolute definition and direct observation. The new unfolds in processes that can proceed slowly, erratically or contradictorily in practice, as practice is both contingent and routinised at the same time here. Pursuant to the idea of the iterativity of discourses, as proposed by Butler (Butler, 1993), it can also be assumed for social practice that it is always based on what already exists, that it follows on from this and that meanings and explanations shift successively. Transformation is 'directional' (Schatzki, 2019). Pedagogical practices (such as digital practices and individualisation) do not suddenly become 'completely different' but represent a transformation process that irritates existing processes. Over the course of this transformation process, an existing practice may shift so fundamentally that it is seen as being new. 'In relation to one another, micro-differences amount to changes' and result in 'significant differences' (Schatzki, 2019, p. 14). What is 'new' is therefore also a question of the perception of differences between 'old/familiar/known' and 'new/unfamiliar/unknown', which utilise spatial and, above all, temporal scales. For this reason, the new does not become immediately apparent but only through comparison,

which is particularly difficult in ethnographic research, not least because usually only current practice is considered and that in a specific local context, which always appears new to the ethnographer as a 'professional stranger' (Agar, 1996), at least in certain respects.

But the academic perspectives on 'what ethnography is' and how it changes are also diverse and contextualised. Given that there is no 'single tradition and history of educational ethnography' (Sieber et al., 2018, p. 281) and 'only very limited agreement about what ethnography involves' (Hammersley, 2018b, p. 12), what and how 'something' can be marked as a transformation or novelty must always be determined by locations, contexts and the respective starting points (Zirden, 2005). Such context-specific starting points and their historical developments in an international comparison are illustrated by those works that trace and compare country-specific lines of tradition (e.g., Hammersley, 2018a; Milstein & Clemente, 2018; Modiba & Stewart, 2018; cf. the contributions in this volume by Anderson-Levitt, 2013a) and/or disciplinary locations, as well as theoretical (new) developments and their dominance in relation to the specific contexts. In each case, differing and shared focal points, shifts and new emphases can be identified in the respective ethnographies of education. For example, some authors refer to differing disciplinary traditions in the United States and the United Kingdom (e.g., Delamont & Atkinson, 1980) (in which success and failure or relations of difference play a major role) (Delamont, 2013), their relationship to France and the francophone world (which address questions of acquisition of culture especially) (Raveaud & Draelants, 2013), to a 'German *Sonderweg* (i.e., special pathway)' (Sieber et al., 2018, p. 281) that, according to Wulf (2013), is characterised by a strong philosophical orientation, to a 'multidisciplinary position betwixt and between' in Switzerland (Sieber et al., 2018, p. 292), or to some educational ethnography in Scandinavia focusing on childhood and youth (Anderson-Levitt, 2013b). Furthermore, there are—at least in part—different theoretical and methodological as well as thematic shifts, turns and developments in the respective contexts, while scientific communities have different historical and theoretical traditions, as well as resources to conduct their ethnographic research (Anderson-Levitt, 2013b).

Eisenhart (2001, 2018), for example, reconstructs new emphases and changing concepts of culture (2018) that, in the context of the anthropology of education in the United States, are linked to implications for educational research, as well as to the practice of educational ethnography. Triggered by the development of new perspectives and definitions of culture—for example, through 'feminist, ethnic, postmodern and cultural studies' (2001, p. 209)—and their implications, (further) developments in ethnographic research and methodological discussions are occurring. However, Eisenhart also points out that newer conceptions permit a focus 'on features . . . not captured in older versions' (2001, p. 210). At the same time, 'older versions . . . can remain appropriate and valuable' (Eisenhart, 2001, p. 210) for certain research fields and questions. To determine what is new, as indeed how and as what change

and transformation can be understood in each case, it is thus also 'important . . . to be aware of the history of their tradition, of how ethnographic ideas and practices have developed, have been challenged, and have changed over time' (Hammersley, 2018a, p. 212).

This diversity in traditions and topics clearly continues and is reflected in contemporary approaches. Currently, educational studies incorporate a variety of approaches to ethnography that follow different strategies with respect to both the research design and theoretical framings. Recent debates point to approaches that combine differing methodical and methodological practices, such as ethnography and discourse analysis (Macgilchrist & Van Hout, 2011), or ethnography, network theory and social semiotics (Hipkiss et al., 2019). Especially with regard to global crisis phenomena, qualitative–interpretive social research is facing new challenges, as well as new opportunities, such as 'digital ethnography' (Pink et al., 2016), 'netnography' (Kozinets & Gambetti, 2020), the use of 'new' media in technocultural worlds and the mediatisation of everyday (research) life (Dahlgren & Alvares, 2013; Reichertz, 2017). Moreover, different disciplinary perspectives exist within ethnographic research on pedagogical and educational practices, some of which are controversial and complementary, for example, in education, sociology and anthropology. Furthermore, national discourses within each ethnographic community also differ.

To bring 'the new' into focus from an ethnographic perspective, this edited volume propounds theoretical, empirical and methodological approaches. In these contributions, differing aspects and approaches are discussed intended to outline the theoretical, methodological and empirical implications of addressing the 'the new' in educational ethnography.

Theoretical Implications: Constituting the New in and with Theory

The theoretical practice of ethnography goes beyond the mere application of existing theories (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2019). Not only does ethnography claim to reveal new theoretical perspectives and to adapt transforming, new or innovational theoretical approaches and families of theories, such as new materialisms and theories of practice, it also asserts that the theoretical approaches selected—whether established or new—and heuristics can be confounded by empirical observations that risk 'touching and transforming [the ethnographer's] own conceptualised ideas by the research results' (Breidenstein et al., 2015, p. 166, authors' translation). At the same time, ethnography seeks to create new theory about the organisation of the pedagogical practice. Hence, this section focuses on how ethnographic research produces (new) theories and how the new can be theorised in ethnographic research. However, new theories or new forms of applying theory emerge within historical transformations of both academia and the fields as indeed the subjects of research. Another aspect covers the question of how ethnography is related

to theory—either in new ways or applied to new research subjects and fields. Furthermore, exploration is, of course, required as to whether ethnography in education needs new theories, in addition to how they could emerge. Are there theoretical approaches that facilitate new empirical access opportunities? And how do they relate to researchers' practices in the field? These questions aim to provide basic assumptions about the function and positioning of theory within educational ethnography. When viewing educational phenomena in a transformative setting such as digitality, the need to reapply theory or to transform theory becomes necessary. Established theory might not suffice. On the other hand, 'off-the-shelf' theories that are widely accepted in other fields may need to be relocated, for instance, so as to challenge anthropocentric research (Tsing, 2021).

Methodological Approaches: Perception and Representation of the New in the Ethnographic Research Process

Methodologically, the search for 'what's new' entails some challenges for educational ethnographic research (Jeffrey et al., 2009; Spindler & Hammond, 2006). Considering social and cultural transformations, such as digitalisation and the transnationalisation of settings and biographies, new techniques need to be included so as to be able to actually see and understand new social realities. The requirement to expand the researcher's perspective so as to perceive the unexpected, the unknown and the confounding in the field and then to commit it to paper as a familiar practice is particularly challenging because the new is characterised precisely by the fact that it eludes conventional descriptions. Another challenge in ethnographic work consists of how to transfer or translate observations and impressions that do not necessarily exist primarily as language into words and writing (Hirschauer, 2001), but also into materials or artefacts, actor–network assemblages (Latour, 2005), or bundles and constellations of practices and material arrangements (Schatzki, 1996). It becomes obvious here that the new, for example, by doing something new, is always related back to established research practices. Furthermore, when ethnographers—as individuals or in collaborating with others—follow actors and their practices, as well as artefacts and objects in and beyond institutional boundaries, they often appear as 'newcomers' and must relate to the field against the background of their own biographical positioning(s) and their own experience in pedagogical practice. However, what is perceived and qualified as 'new' and foreign in the field can vary depending on one's own previous biographical experiences (Anteliz, 2022).

Against this backdrop, methodological questions arise, for instance, how 'what's new' in the field can be perceived and identified over the course of the ethnographic research process. This implies the development of new methodical tools or the transformation of their adaption to specific research settings. Trends, including autoethnography, videography, netnography or collaborative multisited ethnography, provide impulses for a methodology that detaches

itself from the subject-centred focus on interactions but, at the same time, is confronted with the question of what is specifically ethnographic. Furthermore, what is new needs to be recognised not only by the researcher in question but also by the scientific community. Which new strategies of participation and transfer characterise the research process? Hence, not only methodical and methodological shifts but also changes in the academic discourse on the field itself are required. This represents one of the major aims of this volume. Not only does this affect the content level but also the ways in which research is published and presented, as well as how participants become involved. In order to avoid the reproduction of hierarchies, a democratisation of research processes is necessary in this context.

Empirical Perspectives: New(ish) in the Field

Ethnography is characterised by a broad spectrum of heterogeneous research fields, which in itself generates great complexities (Beach et al., 2018; Nadai & Maeder, 2005). (Educational) fields are constituted via ethnography through analytical penetration and alienation. Hence, they (and their overlapping spread) can appear in a new light when entering the field differently or using other techniques and approaches. Clear localisations of 'the field' have become revised, for example, over the course of establishing a multisited ethnography (Marcus, 1995) or large-scale 'constellation ethnographies' (Budde et al., 2022). In this context, ethnographic research does not define 'the educational field' as a locally bound space that precedes ethnographic observation, but rather as one that is constituted by and, at the same time, transformed through and with observation (Harrison, 2018; Jerolmack & Khan, 2018). With regard to pedagogical and educational practices, this perspective seems fruitful insofar as such practices cannot be located exclusively in educational institutions, for example, school buildings, but are broadly dispersed and applied in different social and material spaces (Budde & Eckermann, 2021; Fitzpatrick & May, 2022). Hence, the presumptions of insights into the field need to be discussed so as to provide explanations of novelty, innovation and transformation in educational practices and institutions.

Empirical findings can be helpful in analysing the relationship between the persistence and transformation of educational practices from the perspective of educational science. Yet for that, a dialectical and reflexive approach is required. The relevance of the category of 'the new' in (educational) fields and how it is accorded relevance and thematised by actors and ethnographers in the field represent another task to be discussed. Educational practice is occurring within an intensifying discourse on changing established educational institutions and practices. Well-known but unsolved problems—such as inequality and exclusion, for example—are being overlaid by new processes like AI or global citizenship education, resulting in significant pressure to innovate. Following on from this, adopting a broader perspective would suggest that ethnography contributes to a better understanding of current social crisis phenomena, such as pandemics, climate change, global economic crises and

wars. These not only constitute conditions of practices but also involve inherent issues of social interactions in educational settings that are relevant for both academics and professionals.

This volume consists of revised contributions presented at the 7th Ethnography Conference 2022 in the European University of Flensburg. Further German-language contributions are published under the title 'What's New? Neue Perspektiven in ethnographischer erziehungswissenschaft' (Budde et al., 2024). Both volumes explore the question of what is new in educational ethnography.

References

Agar, M. (1980). Getting better quality stuff. *Urban Life*, *9*(1), 34–50. https://doi.org/10.1177/089124168000900102

Agar, M. H. (1996). *The professional stranger: An informal introduction to ethnography*. Emerald Publishing.

Anderson, S., Gulløv, E., & Valentin, K. (2013). Educational anthropology in a welfare state perspective: The case of Scandinavia. In K. M. Anderson-Levitt (Ed.), *Anthropologies of education* (pp. 193–212). Berghahn Books.

Anderson-Levitt, K. M. (Ed.). (2013a). *Anthropologies of education*. Berghahn Books.

Anderson-Levitt, K. M. (2013b). Introduction. Anthropologies and ethnographies of education worldwide. In K. M. Anderson-Levitt (Ed.), *Anthropologies of education* (pp. 1–28). Berghahn Books.

Anteliz, E. A., Mulligan, D. L., & Danaher, P. A. (2022). *Routledge international handbook of autoethnography in educational research*. Routledge.

Beach, D., Bagley, C., & Da Silva, S. M. (Eds.). (2018). *The Wiley handbook of ethnography of education*. John Wiley & Sons.

Breidenstein, G. (2010). Einen neuen Blick auf schulischen Unterricht entwickeln: Strategien der Befremdung. In F. Heinzel, W. Thole, P. Cloos, & S. Köngeter (Eds.), *'Auf unsicherem Terrain'* (pp. 205–215). VS Verlag. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-92138-9_16

Breidenstein, G., Hirschauer, S., Kalthoff, H., & Nieswand, B. (2015). *Ethnografie: Die Praxis der Feldforschung*. utb. https://doi.org/10.36198/9783838552873

Budde, J., & Eckermann, T. (Eds.). (2021). *Studienbuch pädagogische Praktiken*. utb. https://doi.org/10.36198/9783838555942

Budde, J., Rißler, G., Blasse, N., & Geßner, J. (2022). Leistungsordnung in inklusiven Unterrichtskonstellationen. In Y. Akbaba & L. Fuhrmann (Hg.), *Schule zwischen Stagnation und Wandel* (pp. 221–253). Springer.

Budde, J., Rißler, G., Meier-Sternberg, M., & Wischmann, A. (Eds.). (2024). *What's new? Neue Perspektiven in ethnographischer Erziehungswissenschaft*. Barbara Budrich.

Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that matter. On the discursive limits of 'sex'*. Routledge.

Crutzen, P. J. (2002). Geology of mankind. *Nature*, *415*(6867), 23. https://doi.org/10.1038/415023a

Dahlgren, P., & Alvares, C. (2013). Political participation in an age of mediatisation. *Javnost—the Public*, *20*(2), 47–65. https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2013.11009114

Delamont, S. (2013). The parochial paradox. Anthropology of education in the anglophone world. In K. M. Anderson-Levitt (Ed.), *Anthropologies of education* (pp. 49–70). Berghahn Books.

Delamont, S., & Atkinson, P. (1980). The two traditions in educational ethnography: Sociology and anthropology compared. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, *1*(2), 139–152.

Eisenhart, M. (2001). Changing conceptions of culture and ethnographic methodology: Recent thematic shifts and their implications for research on teaching. In V. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (pp. 209–225). American Educational Research Association.

Eisenhart, M. (2018). Changing conceptions of culture and ethnography in anthropology of education in the United States. In D. Beach, C. Bagley, & S. M. Da Silva (Eds.), *The Wiley handbook of ethnography of education* (pp. 189–211). John Wiley & Sons.

Engel, J., Göhlich, M., & Möller, E. (2019). Interaction, subalternity, and marginalisation: An empirical study on glocalised realities in the classroom. *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education*, *13*(1), 40–53. https://doi.org/10.1080/15595692.2018.1490717

Feyerabend, P. (1976). *Wider den Methodenzwang*. Suhrkamp.

Fitzpatrick, K., & May, S. (2022). *Critical ethnography and education*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315208510

Goffman, E., & Best, J. (1967). *Interaction ritual: Essays in face-to-face behavior*. Anchor Books.

Greed, C. (1994). The place of ethnography in planning: Or is it 'real research'? *Planning Practice & Research*, *9*(2), 119–127. https://doi.org/10.1080/02697459408722918

Hammersley, M. (2018a). Ethnography of schooling in England: A history and assessment of its early development. In D. Beach, C. Bagley, & S. M. Da Silva (Eds.), *The Wiley handbook of ethnography of education* (pp. 212–239). John Wiley & Sons.

Hammersley, M. (2018b). What is ethnography? Can it survive? Should it? *Ethnography and Education*, *13*(1), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/17457823.2017.1298458

Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (2019). *Ethnography*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315146027

Harrison, A. K. (2018). *Ethnography*. Oxford University Press.

Hipkiss, A. M., Windsor, S., & Sanders, D. (2020). The girl with the garden gloves: Researching the affordances of sensual materialities in the school garden. *Ethnography and Education*, *15*(3), 350–362. https://doi.org/10.1080/17457823.2019.1698309

Hirschauer, S. (2001). Ethnografisches Schreiben und die Schweigsamkeit des Sozialen. *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, *30*(6), 429–451. https://doi.org/10.1515/zfsoz-2001-0602

Hirschauer, S., & Amann, K. (Eds.). (1997). *Die Befremdung der eigenen Kultur*. Suhrkamp.

Hopson, R., & Dixson, A. (Eds.). (2014). *Race, ethnography and education*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315539898

Jeffrey, B., & Walford, G. (2009). *Methodological issues and practices in ethnography*. Emerald Publishing.

Jerolmack, C., & Khan, S. (Eds.). (2018). *Approaches to ethnography: Analysis and representation in participant observation*. Oxford University Press.

Kozinets, R. V., & Gambetti, R. (2020). *Netnography unlimited. Understanding technoculture using qualitative social media research*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003001430

Kuhn, T. S. (1976). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. The University of Chicago Press.

Kuhn, T. S. (1977). *The essential tension: Selected studies in scientific tradition and change*. The University of Chicago Press. https://doi.org/10.7208/9780226217239

Latour, B. (2005). *Reassembling the social: An introduction to actor-network-theory*. Oxford University Press.

Lindner, R. (1990). *Die Entdeckung der Stadtkultur*. Suhrkamp.

Macgilchrist, F., & van Hout, T. (2011). Ethnographic discourse analysis and social science. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, *12*(1). https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-12.1.1600

Marcus, G.E. (1995). Ethnography in/of the world system: The emergence of multi-sited ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *24*, 95–117. www.jstor.org/stable/215593

Meier, M., & Budde, J. (2015). Methodologische Positionen im Feld der Ethnographie – eine Sammelrezension. *Zeitschrift für Qualitative Forschung*, *15*(1), 145–154.

Milstein, D., & Clemente, A. (2018). Latin American educational ethnography. In D. Beach, C. Bagley, & S. M. Da Silva (Eds.), *The Wiley handbook of ethnography of education* (pp. 240–261). John Wiley & Sons.

Modiba, M., & Stewart, S. (2018). Ethnography and education in an African context. In D. Beach, C. Bagley, & S. M. Da Silva (Eds.), *The Wiley handbook of ethnography of education* (pp. 309–439). John Wiley & Sons.

Nadai, E., & Maeder, C. (2005). Fuzzy fields. Multi-sited ethnography in sociological research. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, *6*(3). https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-6.3.22

Pink, S., Horst, H.A., Postill, J., Hjorth, L., Lewis, T., & Tacchi, J. (2016). *Digital ethnography: Principles and practice*. SAGE.

Popper, K.R. (1973). *Objektive Erkenntnis: Ein evolutionärer Entwurf*. Hoffmann und Campe.

Raveaud, M., & Draelants, H. (2013a). Ethnographies of education in the French-speaking world. In K. M. Anderson-Levitt (Ed.), *Anthropologies of education* (pp. 132–149). Berghahn Books.

Reichertz, J. (2017). Neues in der qualitativen und interpretativen Sozialforschung? *Zeitschrift Für Qualitative Forschung*, *18*(1), 71–89. https://doi.org/10.3224/zqf.v18i1.06

Rißler, G., Budde, J., & Schatzki, T. R. (2023). Inclusion, exclusion, and the spaces of practices. In G. Rißler, T. Buchner, & A. Köpfer (Eds.), *Space studies in inclusive education—Interdisciplinary relations* (pp. 71–90). Routledge.

Schatzki, T.R. (1996). *Social practices: A Wittgensteinian approach to human activity and the social*. Cambridge University Press.

Schatzki, T. R. (2019). *Social change in a material world: How activity and material processes dynamize practices*. Routledge.

Sieber Egger, A., & Unterweger, G. (2018). Ethnographic research in schools: Historical roots and developments with a focus on Germany and Switzerland. In D. Beach, C. Bagley, & S. M. Da Silva (Eds.), *The Wiley handbook of ethnography of education* (pp. 281–308). John Wiley & Sons.

Spindler, G., & Hammond, L. (2006). *Innovations in educational ethnography*. Psychology Press. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203837740

St. Pierre, E.A. (2016). Practices for the 'new' in the new empiricisms, the new materialisms, and post qualitative inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & M. D. Giardina (Eds.), *Qualitative inquiry and the politics of research*. Routledge.

Tsing, A.L. (2021). *The mushroom at the end of the world: On the possibility of life in capitalist ruins*. Princeton University Press.

Wischmann, A. (2017). *Dimensionen des Lernens und der Bildung*. Beltz-Juventa.

Wulf, C. (2013a). Towards a historico-cultural anthropology of education. In K. M. Anderson-Levitt (Ed.), *Anthropologies of education* (pp. 29–48). Berghahn Books.

Zirden, S. (2005). *Konstruktion einer ungeschriebenen Theorie Adornos*. Königshausen & Neumann.

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

Part I

Theoretical Perspectives

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

1 Introductory Reflections on New Educational Theory Through Ethnography

Jürgen Budde

New Educational Theory Through Ethnography

As a hypothesis-generating research strategy, ethnography, by its very tradition and orientation, is *per se* interested in developing new theories. Hence, ethnographies are inherently concerned with taking unfamiliar perspectives on the (often well-known) social world and its practices and explaining them by availing of new theories. Accordingly, the tradition of educational ethnography has documented a number of important findings, for example, on the reproduction of inequalities in and through education and its institutions. Another example is Jahoda et al.'s (1935/2017) 'Unemployed in Marienthal' study, which was able to identify the 'tired society' as a central category. Not only does this generate new theories but it also decentres the research perspective. In this way, new perspectives become focused on the familiar. As ethnography is capable of showing in detail, pedagogical practice develops its own logic that differs significantly from the related programme. Because of its fundamental methodological openness, ethnography is constantly evolving. This produces new insights and perspectives, and indeed new styles of ethnographic research.

Beyond this permanent and immanent transformation, however, the discussion about the theoretical perspectives within ethnography has become ever more important over the last few years. What cannot be overlooked is the increasing transgression of existing limitations of ethnographies. Over the past decades, ethnography has often focused on human interaction. In the context of the 'doing whatever' concept, educational studies in particular have long had interactions between people at the centre of their research interests. Two issues arise in this context: The first is an overemphasis of the situational. And second, there is a focus on the human that can be found in other research traditions and directions as well. This is accompanied by an implicit reference to a bourgeois-modern understanding of the (male, withe, abled) subject by attributing autonomous agency to the person. Within this tradition, the theory of subjectivation has had an impact on European ethnography of education. Here, subjects are understood as being discursively generated positions, enriched by power-critical perspectives. At the same time, this line of research remains committed to the subject in a specific way.

DOI: 10.4324/9781032629384-3

This chapter has been made available under a (CC-BY-NC-ND) 4.0 license.

Increasingly, however, other perspectives are being considered in the broadest sense within posthumanist theory. By focusing on artefacts, nonhuman living beings, emotions or atmospheres, these perspectives critically question and, in some cases, forsake the situational, human and subject focus. Of course, with its roots in social anthropology, ethnography has long been interested in materiality: ritual objects, everyday cultural products, educational media and so on. To date, nonhuman perspectives have tended to appear as 'tools' that subjects use for interacting. However, the broad movement in the social sciences—such as Latour's actor–network theory (Latour, 2005) or Barad's posthumanism (Barad, 2007)—towards thinking in practice beyond the human obviously offers new theoretical impulses for educational ethnography and is being increasingly applied accordingly. The ethnographic practice turn (Schatzki et al., 2001) had already initiated the focus on intersubjective interaction. Networks and relations are becoming of interest to a growing extent. Behind this theoretical shift is a manifold feminist or postcolonial critique that is only briefly mentioned here. Overall, the idea of the modern subject is becoming decentred. The ethnographic perspective is currently expanding. Rationality and agency as supposedly typical human characteristics are being critically questioned ever more. Given the global manipulation and exploitation of people and materialities, problematising the subject seems almost necessary in the context of critiquing the Anthropocene. At least three different innovative problematisations, which are also discussed in this volume, can be identified in this theoretical perspective.

On the one hand, materiality in general is becoming more and more important. This is based on the—widely accepted—realisation that human actions occur in the midst of material arrangements. The possibilities for social practice are prefigured within these arrangements. Materialities can consist of artefacts made by human beings, as well as landscapes or environments. Muchow's early study of an unloading bay shows that materialities generate very different practices depending on the actors involved (Muchow, 1930/2017). Without materiality, practice does not exist, whether for individual actors or (interrelated) arrangements.

The relevance of digitality is also growing significantly. This includes the organisation, expansion, delegation and refiguration of human practices that were previously stable in space and time, as well as for research practice. The COVID-19 pandemic in particular has been a catalyst for a shift in the focus of educational research. This process has probably only just begun, and phenomena such as AI, the algorithmification of the social sphere, computer-based feedback systems and digital institutionalisation are likely to become even more influential in the future. Human beings are increasingly coming to be understood as hybrids, and this leads to theories that extend far beyond the subject.

Finally, living actors other than humans are becoming more relevant in the context of multispecies approaches. This means that both the significance of animals in specific situations and constellations, as well as the specific relevance

of (nonhuman) living beings in educational settings, are coming into focus. Indeed, attempts to reverse the perspective and observe the practice 'from the animals' point of view' are rare. But what is effectuated as a playful activity in the 'fur community' also finds its way into the methods of ethnographic research. Here, an explicit shift in focus away from a cognitive–intellectual (meaningful) understanding of reality and towards a sensory and emotional perception of the experience is occurring. A similar attitude towards sensory experience is being applied, for example, to the human body in the course of autoethnographies.

This decentring of the human being and a civil–modern understanding of the subject, which can be seen in all three perspectives, are directly linked to concepts from educational theory. After all, this modern, rational and autonomous subject is essentially produced in and through practices of education. Moreover, educational ideals or competence models are often a reflection of those ideas of the subject that are increasingly problematic from a power-critical and sustainability-orientated perspective. The growing focus on the 'pedagogical' aspect of educational practice is certainly also 'new' in this respect. In this way, the view is being broadened to include a reflection on the basic theories of educational science.

What all three perspectives have in common is not only the recognition of the relevance and agency of digitality, materiality or other kinds of nonhuman beings but also that practice research is itself increasingly following its own logic. The well-known basic ethnographic assumption of 'going where the action is', once articulated by Goffman (1969), also means that research must move ever more consistently beyond the human subject. The materiality, relationality or digitality of the practice needs to be brought more into focus. Methodologically, this is linked to a plea for a greater spotlight on disruption, rupture, improvisation and the contradictory nature of the practice. It seems to be theoretically fruitful and highly connectable ethnographically to start from the assumption that practices are not so stable because they are clear but precisely because they are implicit and full of conflict. Routines are not automatic repetitions. They are fragile bundles. It is exactly this understanding that permits educational ethnography to produce new theories.

References

Barad, K. M. (2007). *Meeting the universe halfway*. Duke University Press.

Goffman, E. (1969). *Where the action is. Three essays*. Allen Lane.

Jahoda, M., Lazarsfeld, P. F., & Zeisel, H. (2017). *Marienthal. The sociography of an unemployed community*. Routledge. (Original work published 1935)

Latour, B. (2005). *Reassembling the social. An introduction to actor-network-theory*. Oxford University Press.

Muchow, M. (2017). *The life space of the urban child*. Taylor and Francis. (Original work published 1930)

Schatzki, T. R., Knorr-Cetina, K., & von Savigny, E. (Eds.). (2001). *The practice turn in contemporary theory*. Routledge.

2 Educational Ethnography in an Age of Technoculture

Exploring Noise and Glitch Instead of Fetishising the New

Felicitas Macgilchrist

Introduction

'Novelty and innovation' represent key issues guiding the development and deployment of educational technology (edtech) from gamified apps, adaptive software and AI-powered learning management systems within the history of educational radio, film and mobile devices. For many educational technologists, learning designers, journalists, policymakers and researchers publishing in high-ranking edtech journals, the focus lies on identifying the 'most novel', most innovative digital technologies and implementing them in educational settings. The public face of digital technology in education—as seen in advertising, social media, policy documents or the news—shows smiling students, pastel colours and clean rooms. Images include smooth surfaces, aesthetic designs and unruffled teachers (Büchner et al., 2023). Cutting-edge edtech is supposed to make learning more motivating and more fun. It promises to relieve teachers from the boring parts of teaching, freeing them up to focus on the 'more important' aspects of teaching. And it is expected to ameliorate inequalities, enabling every child to be included, to participate, to learn and to succeed. As research taking a critical perspective on edtech has long argued, these images and expectations have a tenuous relationship with grounded educational practices (Bock et al., 2023; Eynon, 2013; Macgilchrist, 2012; Selwyn, 2014).

The fetishisation of 'novelty and innovation' underlying this techno-utopian promise resonates more broadly with contemporary technoculture. It includes the myth that technology works well and that it works seamlessly and ethically. Yet when consideration is accorded to instances of the everyday use of technology, for example, when the connection is interrupted during long-distance family FaceTime conversations, when a microphone crackles during a conference or when a social welfare system crashes due to high demand: In each of these instances, everyday life is not rendered easier, smoother, more equitable and more efficient. Families talk about the connection, audience members murmur to their neighbours and people speak to their social workers. The disconnection or interruption 'does' something, and this something is social and material.

DOI: 10.4324/9781032629384-4

This chapter has been made available under a (CC-BY-NC-ND) 4.0 license.

A signal strength of ethnography is to show that things are invariably more complicated, complex, heterogeneous, relational and embedded in power inequalities and specific spatiotemporal contexts than they may appear at first glance. Most ethnographies of digitally networked spaces include scenes where things do not work, where hierarchies are enacted and where unexpected things happen. In educational ethnography, however, this is rarely the explicit focus when exploring networked practices. This chapter thus brings together disparate scenes and episodes from published ethnographies so as to highlight the glitches, errors and failings in digital education, as well as to reflect on some theoretical provocations and political–practical implications for thinking about 'novelty and innovation' in educational ethnography that follow from these observations.

To do this, I draw on Michael Agar's story about joking with traditional social science colleagues that if

> *[T]hey* wind up with a new concept at the end of their study that they didn't have at the beginning, their career is over. If I *don't* wind up with a new concept at the end, *my* career is over.
>
> (Agar, 2006, p. n.p., italics in original)

More extensively, Agar refers to American pragmatism as he reflects on new concepts:

> *Deductive* logic was the way to get new conclusions from old premises. *Inductive* logic was the way to see how well new material fit the available concepts. But both those kinds of logic were *closed* with reference to the concepts in play.
>
> (Agar, 2006)

For Agar, working with the concept of *abductive* logic, the key to ethnography is that ethnographers go out into the world; observe surprising, confusing or unexpected things; experience things that do not make sense; and then devise new concepts to explain the phenomena in ways that have not been expressed before. In this chapter, I propose that these novel concepts are themselves 'glitchy' and that it is precisely this glitchiness which is generative of new insights.

To unfold this argument, I discuss ethnographic research on 'digital education', a shorthand for describing the use of digital educational technology in schools. For many educational technologists, what is novel and innovative is straightforward: the most cutting-edge technology, the most user-friendly technology or the smoothest, shiniest technology. An ethnographic celebration of novelty and innovation would share the attendant assumption that 'the new' (whether a methodology, a concept, a practice, an innovation, a turn or a framework) works as intended or promised. This chapter suggests

that given the history of desires for novel technology, a given technology in itself is not at the heart of what is new today (Hof, 2020; Watters, 2021). Instead, stories are emerging onto the centre stage about the glitchiness of edtech, the indeterminacy of digital education and the errors and failings of today's data-intense edtech, which I will call 'noise' in this chapter. Extending this to ethnography means also centring the glitchiness of new methodologies, concepts, etc.

The chapter thus addresses three aspects of novelty and innovation by considering noise in data in edtech ethnographies: first, ethnographic research that contest technology's promises of renewing education. Instead, these studies illuminate 'noise in data', that is, the failings, errors and everyday glitchiness of edtech. Second, the politics of noise in data, when edtech increases or decreases pressure and expectations on teachers, students or others. Third, the noise created by ethnographies, which aim to grasp phenomena in novel ways but are themselves (inevitably) slippery, fuzzy and 'noisy'.

Noise in Data: Irreducible

Noise arose for me as a concept metaphor after conducting observations in classrooms and reading ethnographies on contemporary education, in which data-intense technology plays a role. Why 'noise'? An initial perspective on noise stems from data science. Here, 'noise' is a disturbance that needs to be minimised or ignored. In *Data Science for Dummies*, '[n]oise, or random noise, is [an] unexplainable variation that is present in *almost all* datasets' (Pierson, 2015, chapter author's italics). In the MIT Press' *Deep Learning*, '[n]oise in data refers to *corrupt* or *incorrect* data' (Kelleher, 2019, chapter author's italics). For Gupta and Gupta, noise refers to '*irrelevant* or *meaningless* data' (Gupta & Gupta, 2019, p. 466, chapter author's italics). These extracts have an uncanny similarity to Agar's description of how ethnography works with abductive logic. Importantly, for data science (as well as for ethnography), noisy and partial data are found in 'almost all datasets', as the previous quotes indicate. Data science does not present a shiny, smooth image of data. The overarching goal is, however, to find a way of working around the noise to get to what are seen as the more important insights. Where data scientists try to reduce or eliminate this unwanted noise, ethnography is often interested in precisely what other research fields see as 'meaningless data' or an 'unexplainable variation'. Ethnographers want to spend time with these data and find out what is going on with them.

In this sense, ethnography shares ground with a second perspective on noise. In cultural studies, material culture and science and technology studies (STS), noise is also seen as essential and irreducible, and therefore a motor for creativity or for political refusal. Peter Krapp refers to 'noise channels' for all those 'expressions of cultural creativity' that embrace limitations and make use of technical glitches, errors and bugs (Krapp, 2011, p. xiii). He writes about glitch electronica—whether in music or image—and how these

visual and recording artists digitally transcode audiovisual 'raw data': They leave out pixels or compress audio files (Krapp, 2011, p. 53). Or they use fax tones, clicks of electromagnetic interference or crackles from broken analogue filters in their art (Krapp, 2011, p. 55). This challenges mainstream technoculture, in which the glitch is usually part of 'machinic anxiety, an indicator of something having gone wrong' (Russell, 2020, p. 7). But in *Glitch Feminism*, Legacy Russell draws on artists who work *with* the glitch to create 'a fissure within which new possibilities of being and becoming manifest', and especially new frameworks for bodies beyond the binary (Russell, 2020, p. 11). Erica Scourti's (2015) performance piece 'Think You Know Me' plays with the irrelevant and meaningless data produced by our smartphones today: She creates poetry by using the predictive text of her smartphone and foregrounds the noise in today's datafied regimes of prediction.

My thinking about noise is also influenced by a third perspective. Studies across the social sciences and humanities have developed concepts such as 'broken data' (Pink et al., 2018), 'breakdown' (Alirezabeigi et al., 2020), an 'aesthetics of failure' (Cascone, 2000), 'leaking' (Chun, 2016), 'lively data' (Lupton, 2015), 'maintenance' (Mattern, 2018), 'repair' (Pink et al., 2019), 'rotted data' (Boellstorff, 2013) or 'zombie media' (Hertz & Parikka, 2012) to consider the kinds of messiness and the doingness of digital devices that this chapter foregrounds. While these concepts have proven helpful in thinking about when *things go wrong*, each concept metaphor has its limits. If it is 'broken', it sounds like it would be sensible to fix it; 'breakdown' can imply major crises, rather than mundane everyday situations.

Building upon this work, one goal in this chapter is to develop these previous reflections on the fractured nature of using data-based technologies through *noise* as a concept metaphor. The key idea about noise is that in everyday life, as in data science, *there is (almost) always noise*. Michael Serres has written that 'background noise is the ground of our perception, absolutely uninterrupted, it is our perennial sustenance, the element of the software of all our logic' (Serres, 1985, p. 7). The Yale School of the Environment reports that activists, scientists and officials are trying to protect 'the last quiet places on the planet' (Morber, 2020). Audre Lorde reminds us, 'Your silence will not protect you' (Lorde, 1977/2019, p. 30). And the metaphor of noise can speak to the specifically digital (or datafied) condition in which we live: '[C]onstraints are effects at one's disposal, not simply noise to be canceled. Yet arguably, the era of noise canceling really takes off with the advent of digital technologies' (Krapp, 2011, p. 57).

Noise in Data: Reading Ethnographic Episodes

In order to reflect on the theoretical relevance of noise in data with respect to novelty, innovation and transformation in educational ethnographic research, this section considers episodes from recent ethnographies through the concept of noise, exploring (i) noise and prediction, (ii) noise and automation,

and (iii) noise in the classroom. The guiding argument is that 'noise' is a key concept metaphor, emerging from thick ethnographic work that contests the policy and media discourse, as well as much mainstream research on digital media and education.

Noise and Prediction

The first episode is the closest to the concept of noise in data science. Madisson Whitman (2020) spent 12 months with 'data personnel', that is, data scientists, IT administrators, developers and network architects, at a large university in the United States. Whitman's core argument is that data personnel 'sort student data into "attributes" and "behaviours", where "attributes" are demographic data that students "can't change"' (like race, class or gender categorisations) and 'behaviours' are data that are supposed to reflect what students can choose or have some control over, like attending class, paying attention in class or studying on campus. The university's immediate goal is to identify 'behaviours' that they can 'nudge' students to change. The overall goal is to increase retention, that is, the number of students who successfully complete their degree courses. Whitman's main argument is that this focus on behaviours, rather than on attributes, renders demographic inequalities invisible. It transfers the 'burden of success' to students who are positioned as responsible for their own success.

There is also, however, a fascinating sidenote in the article about noise in data. These data personnel are working with big data. But Whitman shows how they have to generate the data as they are working on them. 'Jenny', for instance, an administrator, recounts how difficult it was to get data on class attendance. Not all educators noted attendance, and those who did, did not record attendance in the same format. Thus, the team started using network logs as 'the best available proxy for behaviour' (2020, p. 8). Proxies bring in noise in the specific sense of corrupt, inaccurate or unexplainable data, as noted earlier.

Network logs 'contain data about time, date, and duration of a student's use of the Wi-Fi network, along with which routers they connect to and some general information about browsing activity' (Whitman, 2020, p. 8). But to get these network logs, the data personnel repurposed data that were originally collected by their IT colleagues to monitor how reliably the campus Wi-Fi networks were working. Network logs were not intended to provide any information about students. But because students have to log in to the Wi-Fi network using their *individual* accounts that are administered by the university, students can be associated with their Wi-Fi use (Whitman, 2020, p. 8). Thus, network logs could become a *proxy for a student's physical presence on campus*. These network logs generate huge amounts of data for analysis.

For Will, another administrator, the network logs were also a *proxy for student engagement*. Previously, the university had conducted surveys in which

students self-reported about, for example, how many hours, on average, they studied per week or how many hours they met with peers outside of class. For Will, the predictive model that he helped to develop (and which included the use of these network logs) gave them an 'actual behavioural marker where we can truly see how much time a student spent on campus' (Whitman, 2020, p. 8).

Yet the model's datasets are full of 'noise'. Data personnel described how unevenly the network logs record data. There are power cuts, network overcrowding and poor connections. Some students did not have a Wi-Fi device, and short connections did not always register. Whitman compared the visualisation of her own network logs with her notes on where she had been: 'I consistently found chunks of missing time, incorrect geolocations, and overall an inaccurate picture of my time on campus' (2020, p. 9). When she talked about this with staff, some of them joked that their own network logs made it look like they were never at work.

One of the data scientists working on the predictive model mentioned that 'there's just nothing you can do about' the missing data; 'the hope is that it's sufficiently random that for any machine learning purpose, it will not matter that it [sic] is missing'. He hopes that the absences will not have an effect on prediction, that is, predictive correctness. 'That may or may not be true', he says, 'but it's an assumption that we have to make because we don't have a lot of choice'. Another data scientist gave Whitman a similar response, saying that the missing data have a 'minimal effect' on the prediction.

It is important to note here that these predictions of risk and success can seriously impact students' lives (Jarke & Macgilchrist, 2021). However, that is not the focus of this chapter. Reflecting on the specific noise in data in this highly data-driven university, we can note two key issues. First, a '*found system*' that generated data for entirely new purposes. The data personnel found an existing maintenance system for Wi-Fi networks across the campus and reappropriated it to track students and analyse their chances of completing their degrees. The data are, however, full of errors. Since a lot of the programming is based on bits and pieces of code found somewhere and designed for some other purpose, this constituted a widespread phenomenon. Second, data scientists implemented assumptions that *rendered missing data irrelevant*. The data scientists *all* acknowledged that data were missing or glitchy. To carry out their jobs, they pushed the noise away and made it 'not matter'. Noise is something that they all knew about, but in practice, it seemed best to ignore it. This seems broadly relevant for many people dealing with noise in educational data.

This example of noise and prediction is closely tied to the notion of noise in data science. The following examples extend the metaphor of noise by moving, step by step, further from data science. The metaphor itself becomes noisy in the process but hopefully, and in the spirit of a theoretical provocation on 'what's new', precisely the noise *created by* the concept illustrates the *utility of* the concept in explaining the phenomena.

Noise and Automation

This second example is from a publication written with colleagues during an ethnographic project with a secondary school class in Germany (Wagener-Böck et al., 2023). Our focus was on 'everyday automation' (Pink et al., 2022). The paper's main argument was that phenomena often termed 'automated' are mutually generated (i.e., 'co-produced') across teacher, student, hardware and app. Drawing on the prefix 'sym-' from the Greek for 'together' and inspired by Donna Haraway (2017), our main argument was that observing classroom practices with automated technology is less accurately described as *auto*-mation (from self, autopoiesis) and better described as *sym*-mation (from together, sympoiesis).

In one example, a teacher, Carla, describes an incident where a student, Noah, created an online quiz (a Kahoot), for his science presentation. The school is in Germany, and the class is in German, so he prepared his presentation and the quiz in German. Carla tells us how Noah wanted to create a Kahoot but the quiz took on a life of its own. He sent her his draft, she corrected it and sent it back; he sent it again, she corrected it again and so on, 'like five times'. It was, she says, madness. There were wrong words, nonsense words and words that were missing. Then, someone told her this was happening because the Kahoot app is programmed in English, and it was auto-correcting Noah's German incorrectly.

> Well, he [Noah] is super, he always wants to do everything correctly and he was very enthusiastic, right? But until I understood I was wondering why on earth has he got a mistake there again? And that it wasn't him, it wasn't him, but that it was because of the program and the app.
>
> (Int_LuL_08, chapter author's translation)

Reading this episode through the metaphor of noise in data foregrounds that although Kahoot's algorithm is working its auto-correct, there is noise in the signal: The auto-correct does not automatically shift to German, so it cannot correct correctly. The result is an unwanted disturbance for Noah and Carla. Meaningless nonsense turns up. In this mundane example of automation in education, Carla's story shows how she, Noah and the quiz app together 'sympoietically' coproduced the automation.

When novel technology is analysed in critical research on edtech, studies often critique what is likely to happen if the promises of the edtech industry are implemented. With automation, one concern is that teaching becomes more machine-like, that teachers become managers and that they are less emotionally involved with their students. This scene, observed in an ethnographic study in which we spent slightly over a year with Noah, Carla and the rest of the class, seems to starkly contrast this kind of critique of what is likely to happen as more automated systems are used in schools. This is partly because the scene is suffused with noise.

As she related this event to us, Carla revealed her confusion over why these mistakes kept occurring. She emphasised her faith in Noah's abilities as a good student, a keen, enthusiastic student. Entangled with the noisy data, Carla did not seem to become more machine-like in her teaching practice nor orient herself more to the technology than to the student. Instead, social relations stood at the forefront of her story. She was able to turn the noise in the data into a good story of living with the noise of digital technologies. The story ends well. Someone tells her what the reason is. Noah's grades are not negatively affected. Nor is her perception of his abilities.

As a concept metaphor capturing digital innovation practices, noise has political implications. Carla's tale enacts technoculture's 'machinic anxiety' about things going wrong with technology (Russell, 2020, p. 7). In a practice akin to artists' working with the glitch, the episode arguably shows how the noise in data created 'a fissure within which new possibilities of being and becoming manifest' (Russell, 2020, p. 11). Social connections were remade in this moment, and meaningless data produced by the auto-correct became part of new social interactions (with ethnographers). If ethnography can render visible and more widely accepted that noise is inevitable in most classrooms deploying automated technology, what impact could that have on teachers or students feeling machinic anxiety in the face of increased automation?

Noise in the Classroom

The third example unfolds in an international school in Belgium where students could bring their own smartphones and laptops to work with in class (bring your own device—BYOD). The ethnographer's attention was drawn to 'breakdowns', things that happened unexpectedly in class (Alirezabeigi et al., 2020). Incidents included a cyberbullying incident and a school-wide interruption to regular teaching and learning when construction workers accidentally cut through the school's central network fibres, and thus cut the entire network connection for about a week. The authors also refer to a 'worldly breakdown', that is, a moment in which events in the 'outside world' interrupted regular school practices.

One day, just a few minutes before school started, headlines announced a terrorist attack in their city. There was not much information at the time, so the teacher said a few words about the attack but then started the regular biology class. As the class progressed, the main screen showed a YouTuber explaining degrees of freedom with PowerPoint slides. At the same time, students were receiving real-time notifications on their individual devices. When the teacher announced a five-minute break to prepare an experiment, Samira Alirezabeigi overheard students talking: 'Taxis are free in *CityName* now'. 'All the other schools in *CityName* are closed'. 'Facebook has activated their safety button!' '26 deaths and injured already' (2020, p. 198).

The authors explain what is happening with the help of Madeleine Akrich's influential work in STS on 'scripting' and 'de-scripting'. In this scene, Alirezabeigi

et al. write, two different scripts bump into each other. The teacher's *lesson script* inscribes for the students' laptops the sole function of their being educational devices for taking notes. But a second script interrupts the lesson script. The authors describe this as the *laptop's script*—a '*window* to the world' (2020, p. 199). During the five-minute break, students stop subscribing to the lesson script and start talking about the news alerts they have been receiving.

Reading this scene through the metaphor of 'noise' can benefit from this script metaphor. A script has order, a sequence and turn-taking. If another script appears and 'runs' at the same time, there are going to be complications. The second script sounds like noise interrupting the first script. The person who wrote the first script and is trying to run it may be annoyed by the interruption and noise—elements that are not supposed to be here right now. At the same time, if we assume that noise is always present and irreducible, then precisely, this 'window to the world' offered by individual devices is inevitably available in classrooms that use any kind of devices.

Alirezabeigi and colleagues argue that we cannot intentionally observe breakdowns. Their breakdowns are large events (cyberbullying, cut fibre optic cables, terrorist attack). In that sense, no, it is not possible to plan to observe this kind of breakdown. But if we reorient slightly to 'noise', we make both an empirical and ontological shift. Networked devices, as windows to the world, inevitably bring in some kind of outside noise, even if it is only a WhatsApp message or photos from the weekend. If we orient to this hum of background noise, we are able to gain a better understanding of the everyday sociomaterial doings of digital devices beyond the shiny images of successful teaching and learning but also apart from major breakdowns. What is novel in ethnographies of digital classrooms is, as this and other recent publications show, that ethnographers can now *expect* to observe this kind of *unexpected* thing (Cone, 2021; Proske et al., 2023; Rabenstein et al., 2022; Rafalow, 2020; Sims, 2017; Watkins et al., 2018; Wolf & Thiersch, 2021).

Concluding Thoughts

The ethnographies of 'digital education' cited in this chapter have different guiding research questions and priorities. They do not always emphasise the tiny aspect of noise that I have highlighted. Instead, they explore, for example, students' private lives, teachers' work or digital inequality. They utilise a range of theoretical vocabularies to describe their research, from new materialism to critical race theory. All, however, describe what I have been calling 'noise in data'. Noise is when data are strange, when they do not fit expectations or when they are unwanted. Data scientists acknowledge that most complex datasets include noise. One goal in this chapter was to bring these elements and aspects from diverse work together under one conceptual heading to accord it a more central place in ethnographic research. If we accept that noise is not a temporary glitch but a *constant* feature of real-life datasets, then what can the metaphor achieve in ethnographic research?

'Noise' is the key 'concept metaphor' here because it holds three dimensions together. First, by exploring what happens in educational spaces (be that data personnel developing predictive models or classroom practices), ethnographies contest the shiny images of seamless, frictionless technologies improving education. Digital technologies operate through digital data, and data include noise. The ethnographies show, in thick detail, how things do not work as planned, but are interrupted by other things that are unexpected and/or unwanted. These interruptions seem—to borrow the terms from data science introduced earlier—'meaningless' or 'incorrect'. For many ethnographers, this is the attraction of ethnography. Looking closely means being able to examine unexpected or surprising moments, incidents, events or moments that deserve more attention and that often interrupt conventional wisdom (Schiffauer, 2008). Novelty is thus, in an abstract sense, not at all novel. Turning this epistemologically focused gaze to digital education, however, can show how *noise* is becoming newly visible across the various scales, spaces, times, affects, politics, socialities and materialities of 'innovative', 'transformative' educational technology.

Second, the struggles over noise in digitally mediated life reveal the politics of noise. On the one hand, data scientists are aiming to reduce, overcome or ignore noisy data. On the other hand, artists and cultural theorists are embracing noise as an inspiration for creativity or for political dissent. Each position has an impact on ways of living and worldmaking. Ethnographic research can intervene in these struggles with stories of noise. This can help reflect on how edtech adds or relieves pressure on people involved in education. What would happen if educational policymakers, the edtech industry, students, parents and educational practitioners shared the data personnel or digital artists' expectation that noise is inevitable? In addition, ethnographies have shown that the industry's promises of novelty and innovation can be critiqued not only by considering what *would* happen *if* they were enacted but also by showing how these very promises operate as fantasies and fictions that are *unlikely* to be enacted. The politics of noise also reaches beyond local educational sites. Edtech needs matter, bodies, labour and so much more to mine (noisily) for minerals, to build machines in (loud) workshops and to run data centres that hum with noise to hold our 'cloud computing' (Crawford & Joler, 2018; Gorur & Dey, 2021; Knox, 2019). In this sense, noise is a planetary issue.

Third, on a conceptual level, 'noise' could offer a way out of the fascination in education for asking about transformation and stasis. Much research explores what is being transformed with digital technologies, or which traditions persist despite disruption. In this way, research also tends to fetishise the new, rendering novelty a more desirable research focus than, for example, the perpetuation of structural inequality. If tradition and stasis are antonyms of transformation, perhaps 'noise' as a concept metaphor is a useful alternative to step outside the binaries of transformation/tradition. Noise troubles the boundary between transformation and tradition. Noise reminds us, for instance, that even tradition needs work to be performed as that

which appears to be a stable tradition (Anderson, 1991). Practices of reproducing stability are themselves noisy; that is, there is inevitably space for transformation in the interruptions, failings and instabilities of practice. If we look, as, for instance, educational entrepreneurs sometimes do, for evidence that today's schools are just like the schools of the nineteenth century: We can find symbolic traces (front-facing classrooms, old buildings, chalkboards and whiteboards). If we look more closely, as the ethnographers cited in this chapter have done, we find stories of difference within these similarities. Rather than seeing 'tradition' as the opposite of 'transformation', we could explore what happens with our research if we see 'noise'—as a constant feature of real-life datasets—to be the opposite of the binary of 'tradition/transformation'.

The concept of 'noise' itself also reminds scholars that concepts are noisy. I have stretched the metaphor beyond data science understandings of noise, thus adding noise to the concept. The goal was to draw on noise as a concept metaphor to think within educational ethnography and, in particular, to understand phenomena connected to digital data. The metaphor invites us to observe and reflect on the entanglements of sociomateriality. It invites us to observe from the baseline that things regularly do not work out as planned. These are not only temporary ruptures or major breakdowns but the current foundation for contemporary living (where foundations are understood as precarious and constantly requiring work to hold them in place). It thus invites us to question our own 'novel' metaphors, concepts and frameworks. If they have a life beyond the scholars who construct them, this is likely to be a noisy life, taking on meanings above and beyond those meanings inscribed into them by the scholars who propose them. Returning to data science and Agar's approach to abductive logic in ethnography, perhaps it is precisely this 'noise'—irreducible in almost all datasets and added to a concept when it is extended to account for unexpected, confusing or meaningless data—that is generative of 'novel' insights. It is precisely the fragility of concepts in action, which transmute as they enter and unfold in new contexts, with new data, alongside new neighbouring concepts, that are generative of insights. The noisiness of concepts, I have suggested, alongside the noise in the argument of this chapter, could provide theoretical provocations for educational ethnography to explore novelty, innovation and transformation.

Acknowledgements

This chapter emerged from work in the *Lernkultur im digitalen Wandel: Ethnographische Studien zu Schule und Unterricht* (LernDiWa) research project funded by Lower Saxony's Ministry of Science and Culture. Many thanks to the students and teachers who welcomed us into their school and to the team consisting of Kerstin Rabenstein, Nadine Wagener-Böck and Annekatrin Bock for their inspiration.

References

Agar, M. (2006). An ethnography by any other name. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, *7*(4), Article 36. www.qualitative-research.net/fqs-texte/4-06/06-4-36-e.htm

Alirezabeigi, S., Masschelein, J., & Decuypere, M. (2020). Investigating digital doings through breakdowns: A sociomaterial ethnography of a bring your own device school. *Learning, Media and Technology*, *45*(2), 193–207. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2020.1727501

Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined communities*. Verso.

Bock, A., Breiter, A., Hartong, S., Jarke, J., Jornitz, S., Lange, A., & Macgilchrist, F. (Eds.). (2023). *Die datafizierte Schule*. Springer VS. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-38651-1

Boellstorff, T. (2013). Making Big Data, in theory. *First Monday*, *18*(10). http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/4869/3750#56a

Büchner, F., Bittner, M., & Macgilchrist, F. (2023). Imaginationen von Ungleichheit im Distanzunterricht: Analyse eines Policydiskurses und seiner Problemrepräsentationen. *MedienPädagogik: Zeitschrift für Theorie und Praxis der Medienbildung*, *20*, 347–374. https://doi.org/10.21240/mpaed/jb20/2023.09.14.X

Cascone, K. (2000). The aesthetics of failure: 'Post-digital' tendencies in contemporary computer music. *Computer Music Journal*, *24*(4), 12–18. https://doi.org/10.1162/014892600559489

Chun, W. H. K. (2016). *Updating to remain the same. Habitual new media*. MIT Press.

Cone, L. (2021). The platform classroom: Troubling student configurations in a Danish primary school. *Learning, Media & Technology*, *48*, 52–64. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2021.2010093

Crawford, K., & Joler, V. (2018). *Anatomy of an AI system*. https://anatomyof.ai/

Eynon, R. (2013). The rise of Big Data: What does it mean for education, technology, and media research? *Learning, Media and Technology*, *38*(3), 237–240. https://doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2013.771783

Gorur, R., & Dey, J. (2021). Making the user friendly: The ontological politics of digital data platforms. *Critical Studies in Education*, *62*(1), 67–81. https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2020.1727544

Gupta, S., & Gupta, A. (2019). Dealing with noise problem in machine learning data-sets: A systematic review. *Procedia Computer Science*, *161*, 466–474.

Haraway, D. (2017). Symbiogenesis, sympoiesis, and art science activisms for staying with the trouble. In A. Tsing, H. Swanson, E. Gan, & N. Bubandt (Eds.), *Arts of living on a damaged planet* (pp. M25–M50). University of Minnesota Press.

Hertz, G., & Parikka, J. (2012). Zombie media: Circuit bending media archaeology into an art method. *Leonardo*, *45*(5), 424–430.

Hof, B. (2020). The turtle and the mouse: How constructivist learning theory shaped artificial intelligence and educational technology in the 1960s. *History of Education*, *50*(1), 93–111. https://doi.org/10.1080/0046760x.2020.1826053

Jarke, J., & Macgilchrist, F. (2021). Dashboard stories: How the narratives told by predictive analytics reconfigure roles, risk and sociality in education. *Big Data & Society*, *8*(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1177/20539517211025561

Kelleher, J. D. (2019). *Deep learning*. The MIT Press.

Knox, J. (2019). What does the 'postdigital' mean for education? Three critical perspectives on the digital, with implications for educational research and practice. *Postdigital Science and Education*, *1*(2), 357–370. https://doi.org/10.1007/s42438-019-00045-y

Krapp, P. (2011). *Noise channels: Glitch and error in digital culture*. University of Minnesota Press.

Lorde, A. (2019). The transformation of silence into language and action. In *Sister outsider* (pp. 29–33). Penguin. (Original work published 1977)

Lupton, D. (2015). Personal data practices in the age of lively data. In J. Daniels, K. Gregory, & T. M. Cottom (Eds.), *Digital sociologies* (pp. 335–350). Policy Press.
Macgilchrist, F. (2012). E-Schulbücher, iPads und Interpassivität: Reflexionen über neue schulische Bildungsmedien und deren Subjektivationspotential. *bildungsforschung*, *9*(1), 180–204.
Mattern, S. (2018). Maintenance and care. *Places Journal*. https://doi.org/10.22269/181120
Morber, J. (2020). Listening to silence: Why we must protect the world's quiet places. *Yale Environment*. https://e360.yale.edu/features/listening-to-silence-why-we-must-protect-the-worlds-quiet-places
Pierson, L. (2015). *Data science for dummies* (For Dummies). Wiley-VCH.
Pink, S., Berg, M., Lupton, D., & Ruckenstein, M. (Eds.). (2022). *Everyday automation. Experiencing and anticipating emerging technologies*. Routledge.
Pink, S., Ruckenstein, M., Willim, R., & Duque, M. (2018). Broken data: Conceptualising data in an emerging world. *Big Data & Society*, 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1177/2053951717753228
Pink, S., Salazar, J. F., & Duque, M. (2019). Everyday mundane repair: Banknotes and the material entanglements of improvisation and innovation. *Tapuya: Latin American Science, Technology and Society*, *2*(1), 458–477. https://doi.org/10.1080/25729861.2019.1636619
Proske, M., Rabenstein, K., Moldenhauer, A., Thiersch, S., Bock, A., Herrle, M., Hoffmann, M., Langer, A., Macgilchrist, F., Wagener-Böck, N., & Wolf, E. (Eds.). (2023). *Schule und Unterricht im digitalen Wandel. Ansätze und Erträge rekonstruktiver Forschung*. Klinkhardt. https://doi.org/10.25656/01:26251
Rabenstein, K., Wagener-Böck, N., Macgilchrist, F., & Bock, A. (2022). Interferenzen in digitalen Praktiken der Bereitstellung von unterrichtlichen Aufgaben. Ethnographische Beobachtungen in der Pandemie. *Sozialer Sinn*, 297–316. https://doi.org/10.1515/sosi-2022-0016
Rafalow, M. H. (2020). *Digital divisions. How schools create inequality in the tech era*. University of Chicago Press.
Russell, L. (2020). *Glitch feminism. A manifesto*. Verso.
Schiffauer, W. (2008). *Parallelgesellschaften*. transcript Verlag.
Scourti, E. (2015). Think you know me. In R. Bishop, K. Gansing, J. Parikka, & E. Wilk (Eds.), *Across and beyond: A transmediale reader in post-digital practices, concepts and institutions* (pp. 181–185). Sternberg Press.
Selwyn, N. (2014). *Distrusting educational technology: Critical questions for changing times*. Routledge.
Serres, M. (1985). *Genesis*. University of Michigan Press.
Sims, C. (2017). *Disruptive fixation: School reform and the pitfalls of techno-idealism*. Princeton University Press.
Wagener-Böck, N., Macgilchrist, F., Rabenstein, K., & Bock, A. (2023). From automation to symmation: Ethnographic perspectives on what happens in front of the screen. *Postdigital Science and Education*, *5*, 136–151. https://doi.org/10.1007/s42438-022-00350-z
Watkins, S. C., Cho, A., Lombana-Bermudez, A., Shaw, V., Vickery, J. R., & Weinzimmer, L. (2018). *The digital edge: How Black and Latino youth navigate digital inequality*. New York University Press.
Watters, A. (2021). *Teaching machines. The history of personalized learning*. MIT Press. https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/teaching-machines
Whitman, M. (2020). 'We called that a behavior': The making of institutional data. *Big Data & Society*, *7*(1), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1177/2053951720932200
Wolf, E., & Thiersch, S. (2021). Optimierungsparadoxien. *MedienPädagogik: Zeitschrift für Theorie und Praxis der Medienbildung*, *42*, 1–21. https://doi.org/10.21240/mpaed/42/2021.03.07.X

3 Rich, Intimate and Immersive

Using Netnography for Educational Research in an Age of Technoculture

Rossella C. Gambetti and Robert V. Kozinets

Netnography for Educational Research

Digital platforms are changing how educational institutions, teachers and students gain access to and share information, as well as learn and build communities. The variety of digital technologies and their affordances—video, text, image, audio and media—offer a wide range of opportunities for ongoing personal and collective learning and professional development. Among digital platforms, social media have become increasingly visible within higher education settings as teachers move away from wholly face-to-face teaching to include more flexible learning opportunities afforded by digitally mediated applications (Howard, 2021). Such opportunities include YouTube, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Pinterest, Reddit and Twitter. These platforms are often mobile, allowing for autonomous connectivity to knowledge anytime, anyplace and anywhere (Howard, 2021). Moreover, since social media functionality is based on user-generated content, both teachers and students can construct, co-construct, share and edit any form of digitally mediated content, making social media a particularly rich and variegated territory of content production for educational purposes.

In higher education, research has largely investigated how social media and networked technologies have impacted scholarly and pedagogical practices. Studies have explored how educators utilise and integrate social media platforms for professional purposes like instructional design, curriculum support and classroom practice (Gikas & Grant, 2013; Roblyer et al., 2010; Tess, 2013). Other research has examined how social media are used to create communities of professional practice aimed at supporting students' university paths (Eaton & Pasquini, 2020). Additionally, studies have investigated how academics engage in networked participatory scholarship (Veletsianos & Kimmons, 2012) and conduct open educational practices within social media to gain intentional support and advice for professional needs (Cronin, 2017; Veletsianos & Stewart, 2016). Digital and social media platforms have become even more imperative as traditional modes of instruction shifted to remote and online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, demanding that education professionals seek advice and best practices to increase the efficacy of their

DOI: 10.4324/9781032629384-5

This chapter has been made available under a (CC-BY-NC-ND) 4.0 license.

teaching efforts in times of global crisis, disruptive change and fast evolving technological and social scenarios (Muljana et al., 2022).

Alongside education, digital and social media platforms have become predominant and preferred sites of connection, commerce, consumption and creativity that contain rich and continuous streams of conversation and the exchange of cultural meanings (Kozinets, 2024). With so many people—teachers, students and citizens—denizens of complex media and technological realities that may involve switching between Twitch, Discord, TikTok, Instagram and Twitter in the same minute, researchers have a powerful need for methods that allow them to capture the rich reality of people's social media usage and its consequent cultural effects upon identity, performance and sociality (Kozinets, 2024), including practices such as teaching and learning.

This rich reality is based on pervasive technological media and their mediation of, interaction with and embeddedness in human life. This phenomenon has been termed 'technoculture' (Penley & Ross, 1991; Haraway, 1991). In a recent reconceptualisation of the term, technoculture has been held to refer to the contemporary blend of technologies, social forms and cultural experiences that happen through and with technologies (Kozinets, 2019) and that impact people's lives, how they build their identities, how they socialise and relate to the world and how they consume. This includes their vast and extended range of educational experiences, whether as teachers and professional educational staff, or as students, lifelong learners or learners and teachers in the wild.

Today, capturing life experiences that move between physical life, social media platforms, virtual and augmented realities, mobile and immersive technologies, and AI encounters calls for a research approach that is digital native, flexible and dynamic. Netnography is tailor-made for this purpose, being constantly on the move incorporating and reflecting the evolving manifestations of contemporary technoculture. In its latest definition, netnography has been conceptualised as an evolving approach for gaining cultural understanding that involves the systematic, immersive and multimodal use of digital traces, elicitations and observations (Kozinets & Gretzel, 2024). As a form of applied qualitative research that is an adaptation of ethnography, netnography follows a specific set of research practices to capture and articulate the meanings of discourses and interactions generated within and through digital and social media platforms and immersive technologies (Kozinets, 2020).

Netnography has been increasingly applied to study educational settings over the last 20 years (O'Reilly et al., 2007; Kulavuz-Onal & Vásquez, 2013; Harwati, 2019; Skukauskaitė et al., 2017; Eaton & Pasquini, 2020; Hammersley, 2021; Alnwairan et al., 2022). For instance, Kulavuz-Onal and Vasquez (2013), Saadatdoost et al. (2014) and Eaton and Pasquini (2020) used netnography to investigate educational communities of practice by gathering teachers, staff and students on multiple platforms to understand the culture of the communities, the roles played by their members and the type of content exchanged and negotiated. Along the same lines, Wallace et al. (2018) used netnography to both elicit and analyse online educational participation and

the creative elicitation strategies implemented to promote it through an online community of practice aimed at educating children about healthy nutrition.

Recently, Chen (2023) conducted netnographic research on the science education curricula and the overall interaction between students and teachers in a college of a national university in Taiwan, combining netnography of online educational content with ethnography and archival data analysis of campus space, campus history and school positioning and discourse. Other scholars have adopted a more reflexive approach and provided a meta-analysis of their application of netnography as a pedagogical method, discussing its benefits over other methods in supporting and enhancing student learning (O'Reilly et al., 2007; Hanell & Jonsson Severson, 2023). Among these reflective studies, Howard (2021) designed and implemented a novel process for conducting and interpreting auto-netnography in online teaching. As a reflexive online participant-scholar, Howard crafted netnography as a co-constructed journey where teachers, students and technologies recurrently interact and shape each other's experiences and actions.

Despite the growing body of netnographic research in educational settings, there are relatively few educational netnographies and only some (e.g., Wallace et al., 2018; Howard, 2021; Hanell & Jonsson Severson, 2023) that seek to develop the method for the purposes of educational researchers. The aim of this chapter is to encourage greater methodological innovation and enhance the revelatory potential of its investigative design.

Netnographic research in education would benefit from building additional bridges with other disciplinary domains whose trajectories may drive educational change, as they immediately resonate with technological innovation occurring in fields such as digital platforms, virtual and immersive technologies, AI and robotics. These disciplinary domains include consumer culture, new media anthropology and social media studies, influencer and creator economy studies, and emergent AI-based experiential technological consumption. These domains are altering, extending and advancing research boundaries to include a growing variety of novel technocultural phenomena that provide access to new environments, platforms, tools, devices and affordances. As sister fields and related topics, these areas and ideas could serve as important sources of inspiration for educational netnographers and educational social media researchers inasmuch as they bring to the fore technocultural phenomena as new fundamental components of contemporary educational culture that can strongly impact teaching, learning, interacting, operating and researching educational settings.

This chapter aims to provide thought-provoking examples of contemporary technocultural phenomena that could challenge and inspire innovation in educational netnography. After briefly illustrating netnography's research practices and how these reveal the rich, intimate and immersive nature of the method, the remainder of the chapter engages in a methodological reflection of the question, 'How is netnography on the move today?'. Notably, we provide a critical discussion of two emerging intertwined phenomena of contemporary

technoculture occurring in the interrelated domains of consumer culture, social media culture and influencers, and the creator economy that pose new questions and methodological challenges to netnography and that may inspire netnographers in education: (1) *emerging practices of visual technoculture* and (2) *increasing human–technology entanglements*. We discuss these phenomena as they involve and alter three fundamental components of the technocultural experience: content, relationships and agency. For both phenomena, we also highlight potential implications that bridge them with educational settings.

Netnography Research Practices at a Glance

Netnography is a collection of six distinct movements performed during a four-stage procedure (Kozinets, 2020, pp. 139–143) aimed at developing a deep and situated cultural understanding. The first stage is related to *problem definition*. This phase involves the researcher in considering themes, procedures and theoretical lenses to help them create and refine research questions that orient the netnographic study design. The second stage is focused on *data collection*. *Investigation*, *interaction* and *immersion* constitute the three research movements covered in the data collection phase.

During the *investigation* movement, the researcher looks for traces that are relevant to the research questions previously identified by utilising search engines and other automated means of information retrieval. Texting a combination of different keywords into search engines, the researcher identifies and sorts out relevant sites, as well as individual conversations, topics and subtopics, tags such as hashtags, and visual images or other nontextual representations (Gambetti & Kozinets, 2022). The investigation enables the researcher to highlight, examine and interpret these traces so as to single out meaningful data that can provide useful clues to include in the analytical process. Investigative operations permit the researcher to develop a wide 'telescopic glance' that maps out the contours of the phenomenon being investigated. During the investigative phase, a very large amount of potentially significant data is identified and scanned. This large amount of data can help reveal the variety of meanings, values, emotions, symbols, rituals, language and vocabularies that are exchanged and negotiated in the cultural flows of digital and social media platforms, as well as in immersive technologies. This surgical attention to considering the variety of details that compose a cultural experience embedded in online interactions and conversations qualifies netnography as a research method that is extremely rich and nuanced.

Interaction is an optional movement. It involves the researcher engaging directly with the research participants. The interaction phase comprises a direct form of contact with participants, in which the researcher elicits particular data. This is done typically through conducting interviews, often online. It may also include other interactional research activities, such as the creation of a purposive research webspace (e.g., a Facebook group, a YouTube channel or a TikTok account), the adoption of digital diaries or the use of mobile

ethnographies. The interaction enables the researcher to elicit particular material of relevance to the research question, which may prove fundamental when online traces gathered in the investigative phase do not provide a sufficiently thorough or accurate basis to develop an adequate level of cultural understanding. This is the case, for example, when online traces do not reveal certain topics of interest or when online interactions of relevance to research are short and elusive, requiring more clarity and deeper explanations.

Immersion involves the researcher engaging deeply with the technocultural context. This means that the digital traces, which are the remnants of individual posts, group conversations and threads, as well as various captured interactions, become reflected through the researchers' own captured notes and recorded observations. As is the case in ethnography, the netnographic researchers' immersion in the cultural context is key to cultural understanding, as the immersion journal—a netnographer's version of fieldnotes—captures the experience of becoming an informed cultural insider.

Immersion represents the heart of the data collection phase and is focused on identifying highly meaningful 'deep data'. Deep data include online traces that are relevant to the research question and that stand out as being particularly revelatory, rich in meaning and expressive of the cultural world of the research participants. Deep data can incorporate, for instance, a post on a social media platform that reveals intimate disclosures about a person's identity in terms of desires, values, beliefs and motivations that drive their behaviours and that shape their view of the world and their lifestyle. Deep data can include a revelatory short video on YouTube where a vlogger engages in a self-confessional, autobiographical storytelling about their gender transition to inspire their audiences (Kozinets et al., 2023) when the research aim is, for instance, to understand the cultural tensions between commodification and identity affirmation in social media. Deep data are related to the Geertzian notion of the 'thick description' (Geertz, 2008), which designates the work of the ethnographer who gets immersed in the research phenomenon and carefully 'inscribes' their encounter with the data, producing an organised, rich and meaningful written account that incorporates their own interpretations and systematisations of the reality observed.

Hence, deep data are not and cannot be a subset of big data, as they do not exist in reality as an autonomous act, item of content or object that can be found or captured by machines or software through a more precise, sophisticated or detailed automatic search than big data. The depth of a piece of deep data depends on the perceptions of the researcher-as-instrument, for deep data are co-constructed by a researcher who adds interpretive work and sensitivity to discover and highlight the cultural meaning of digital information. Deep data can take various shapes as they can refer to a particular social media post or a specific thread of conversations rich in emojis and emotional vocabulary. They can be a comment rich in ideological and speculative reasoning, or they can even be an expressive photo. Deep data can also be a section of the immersion journal of the netnographer (Kozinets, 2020), where they report in a personal

diary about a revelation they have had from a piece of data collected that has allowed them to make a new discovery, envision a pattern of behaviour, connect the dots of an investigated set of practices, grasp a hidden meaning or reveal a cultural tension. And no matter what shape the deep data take, they always incorporate a piece or moment of reality observed, which is then interpreted, organised and elaborated by the researcher according to their mindset and sensitivity in the form of a thick description.

In sum, deep data are dense and personal. They reveal identities, desires, needs, experiences and discoveries that shape people's language, lifestyle and sensitivities. Immersion engages the researcher in writing an immersion journal that elicits a personal, intellectual and emotional account of their encounters with data and their link with existing theorisations.

The fifth movement of netnography is *data integration*. Integration entails the combining of analytical and interpretive activities used by the researcher to develop the understanding needed to bring the observation of the field to the level required for its presentation as findings. In the integration phase, the researcher might collate data, perhaps code them, categorise them and also might apply interpretive lenses such as a humanistic, phenomenological, existential, discourse or hermeneutic analysis to generate cultural understanding that provides an answer to the research questions identified.

The sixth and final movement of netnography relates to the fourth netnographic stage, which is *research communication*. This stage is effected through an operation of *incarnation*, whereby abstract ideas are expressed in a concrete, tangible and accessible form. Incarnation can assume the more standard forms of a poster session at an academic conference or of a research manuscript addressed to scientific journals. But it may also assume the creative shapes of visual art, such as a painting, a sculpture or a videography, as indeed of textual art, such as a poem, or any other original form of art that is held adequate to convey the meanings of the research. In this regard, art-based research has become a prominent domain of scientific production. It entails the use of the artistic process, the actual creating of artistic expressions in all of the different forms of the arts, as a primary way of understanding, examining and reflecting on experiences by both researchers and the people involved in their studies (Kozinets, 2002; Sherry & Kozinets, 2021). The domain of art-based research, which has emerged as an extension of a significant increase in studies researching the nature of the art experience especially in the contexts of higher education and professional practice (McNiff, 1998, 2008), has now increased opportunities to thrive in and expand netnographic approaches aimed at investigating technocultural phenomena.

In the following subsections, we examine two emergent interrelated technocultural phenomena that suggest using these netnographic research movements to study the changing modes of human–technology interactions and their novel expressive capacities. For each of the two, we highlight potential implications for research in educational settings.

Emerging Practices of Visual Technoculture

Contemporary technoculture has increasingly become a visual culture. Consumers' cultural norms of self-presentation on social media platforms are relying to an ever-greater extent on assembling and curating collections of visual content, such as images, emojis, snapshots, selfies, memes, GIFs, stickers and reels (Gambetti, 2021). Sharing visual and audiovisual content via social media elicits the interaction of peers and serves as a means of self-construction and self-validation (Hjorth & Cumiskey, 2018). Thus, emerging visual identity practices, such as Zoom photo-taking, have become institutionalised norms of participatory culture and social interactions in digital contexts and have established novel aesthetic regimes and stylistic canons of individual and collective identity.

In Zoom and similar video communication platforms that are extensively used in educational settings today, the practice of taking a selfie—called zoomie-taking—has established a new and unpolished aesthetic that relies on comfy outfits, natural looks, carefree gestures and cheerful facial expressions that mark a simpler and more authentic modality of self-presentation and socialisation with others (Beccanulli et al., 2024) (see Figure 3.1). In educational settings, this comfy lifestyle and aesthetic enacted by the zoomie may be part of a trend that creates new opportunities to craft the technologically mediated relationship between teachers and students as more horizontal, empathetic and comfortable.

How does the emerging visual practice of the zoomie challenge netnography? While taking a zoomie, users live an embodied experience, where

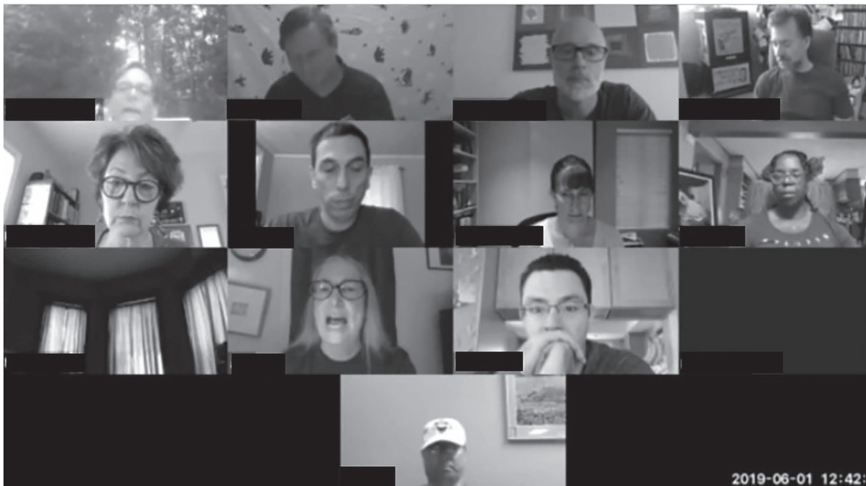

Figure 3.1 A zoomie snapshot during a meeting.

Source: Photograph by the authors

the body, mind and even spirit become involved in the aesthetic process of photo-taking and sharing (Kozinets et al., 2017, p. 9). Moreover, they live a social experience as the visual content they produce becomes the central element of a thick sociality and a connective flow of interactions. Netnography practices of data collection enable the researcher to capture the embodied and social experience of posting and sharing these novel visual snapshots.

While scouting, selecting and scraping zoomies, netnographers collect the multifarious formats of these new visual contents, allowing the researcher to reconstruct their material variety and stylistic canons. Moreover, a researcher would probably not consider the zoomie to be a stand-alone visual piece of data, but instead view it as a cultural trigger of meaningful interactions, whether they are visual through emojis and likes or textual through flows of conversations. This cultural glance would allow the researcher to develop a deeper and more comprehensive understanding that incorporates the whole range of meanings, gestures, symbols, rituals and values in which a zoomie is embedded and that tie it to the emotional, social and symbolic worlds of the user who posts it. Thus, the comfy and unkempt aesthetic provided by the zoomie and uncovered by netnography depicts that a visual trend as a lifestyle marker is a carrier of unique meanings and interplays between individual and collective identity that differs in intriguing ways from the established selfie culture.

If a visual practice like zoomie-taking has challenged netnography to capture a cultural shift that illustrates the rise of new unpolished aesthetic canons and more authentic practices of self-presentation, other visual practices are emerging that are the result of increasingly sophisticated technological innovations involving graphic design and software applications. Novel visual practices, such as motion graphics, 3D illustrations, sci-fi typography, neon palettes, glitch-style effects and AI-generated art (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2023), are transforming digital and social media experiences. They are creating occasions for ludic escape and spectacularisation that add a new twist to the visual realism of zoomies.

As technology advances, the line between the physically embodied world and its digital and other representations is becoming increasingly intertwined and conceptually blurred. Aside from the juxtaposition of real-world elements and illustrations, contemporary technoculture is providing instances of 2D and 3D graphics being used in tandem. By combining realistic with fantasy 2D and 3D elements, users can add a layer of playfulness, spontaneity and humour to their self-presentation and lifestyle, making their sociality more fluid, funny, phatic and rapid.

The growth of AI and AI-image software like OpenAI's DALL-E image generators exemplifies how these technologies are being applied. DALL-E is used to generate new and unique images from textual prompts that users can utilise in various channels, such as social media platforms. In addition to speeding up how designers and artists create images, this generative AI technology may improve workflows and provide opportunities for creativity and marketing. It can be altered, edited and reproduced in many versions and variations

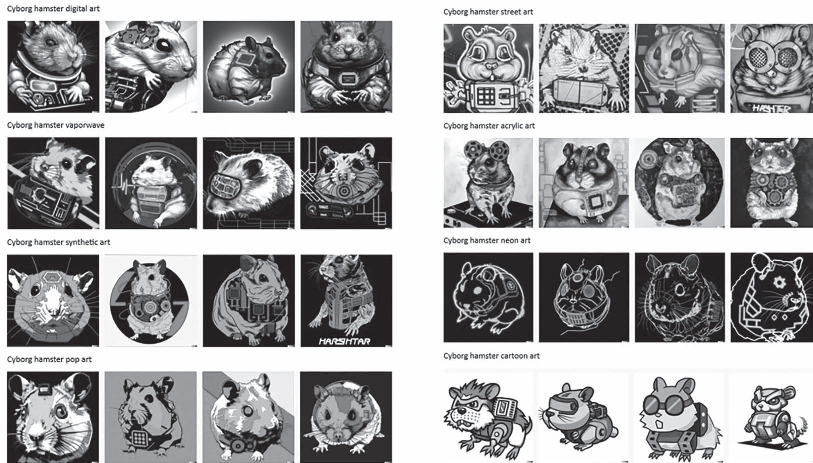

Figure 3.2 DALL-E 3-generated artistic versions of a cyborg hamster.

Source: Photograph by the authors

and can be leveraged by influencers, content creators, ordinary consumers and educators alike to build branded assets and craft evocative self-presentations, representing experiences that range from ludic to educational and professional ones.

Let us consider, for instance, the case of a primary school art teacher who wants to create something novel with which to approach her young students: a hamster influencer. Perhaps it is a cartoon hamster, or a cyborg hamster, to emphasise the technology of its virtual influencer aspect (see Figure 3.2). Figure 3.2 shows a plethora of DALL-E 3-generated versions of a cyborg hamster with which we have exercised using different artistic movements (e.g., digital, vaporwave, synthetic, pop, street, acrylic, neon and cartoon) to generate funny variations.

How might these images be used in an educational setting, precisely in an online educational setting? The case of the cyborg hamster influencer holds significant educational potential as it illustrates how the advancements in current visual technoculture may be used at the service of children's imaginative work to improve their cognitive and language abilities, stimulate their fantasy and provide an experiential environment that is entertaining, visually attractive and socially stimulating. Hamsters are very popular animals among children because of their small, furry bodies, gentle nature and delicate movements. As well, the cyborg imaginary has a long-established transmedia pop culture tradition as a form of children's and teenage entertainment. Generative AI visual programs like DALL-E offer endless opportunities to play with art as they draw from an extensively rich directory of artistic styles. These styles are also often showcased in the sample pages of the software to suggest users' novel, imaginative

textual descriptions with which to play and customise their artistic creations to enhance their amusement while improving their knowledge of the world of art. A primary school art teacher could then use programs such as DALL-E to offer their young students an intriguing, rich representation of art movements and styles to exercise with. Doing so, students could use their favourite animal avatars such as hamsters in an attractive technological form such as a cyborg to prolong their learning excitement. Moreover, teachers could also enhance the linguistic skills and breadth of the children's vocabulary by encouraging them to play with words and textual descriptions on DALL-E to obtain an array of amusing variants of their cyborg hamster visual creations.

DALL-E allows users, teachers and students to play with the endless universes of artistic imagination, where art, fantasy, emotions, meanings and dreams interact in a type of collaboration between human imagination and machine learning. Using netnography, an educational researcher can apply the six movements of netnography—initiation, immersion, investigation, interaction, integration and incarnation—to understand how an educational discourse and its responses might be affected by these new technocultural objects with novel customisable, flexible aesthetics.

As netnography engages with endless new visual forms of avatars and self-presentation constructions that are the result of the programmed collaboration of humans and machines, netnographers dive deeply into the cultural complexities of understanding the effects of how human cognition and feelings are expressed. How these human and machinic elements coexist and interact in a technologically mediated space to create novel technocultures constitutes one of the most important challenges today for netnography and netnographers in many fields, including, we would assume, education—which is currently reeling from the effects of generative AI such as ChatGPT.

Discovering and grasping these linkages could also help educators gain a better understanding of and adapt to a new generation of students who are increasingly crafting their self-presentations, avatars and original visual creations with the help of generative AI. Moreover, netnographers themselves can now play with DALL-E creations to craft endless visual representations of their deep data, vignettes and research contexts, and even use DALL-E in their data elicitations and projective techniques, inviting their research participants—whether they be educators, students or consumers—to use the software for representing their moods and their emotional and symbolic worlds.

Increasing Human–Technology Entanglements

Evolving technoculture also reveals the increasingly intimate entanglements between humans and machines. In this context, entanglement draws on Bruno Latour's (1993, 2005) actor–network view of the entangled relationship between humans and things as a dialectical codependence (Hodder, 2012, p. 94). The degree to which humans and things are entangled reveals 'the deep interlacing of the material, the biological, the social, the cultural

dimensions with the whole suite of ways in which humans and things depend on each other' (Hodder, 2011, p. 164).

Extending this notion of entanglement to the realm of contemporary technoculture allows us to embrace the increasingly sophisticated linkages and dependencies between humans and machines. These linkages and dependencies may take different forms, including variously anthropomorphised and humanised embodiments of machines, the cognitive and emotional capacities of virtual characters and the agentic properties of robots. For instance, intelligent virtual assistant devices and software applications such as Apple Siri and Amazon Alexa are becoming anthropomorphised as they are imbued with voices and personalities (Hoffman & Novak, 2018). Social robots are distributing information such as trending news items, videos or images. They have the potential to influence which information is presented when and to whom in social media spaces (Lugosi & Quinton, 2018, p. 301). Automated online bots governed by algorithmic automation autonomously perform actions such as posting, re-posting, liking, following, unfollowing or direct messaging other accounts.

Current generative AI developments are extending the capabilities of virtual assistants and chatbots. With its ability to understand and generate human-like language, ChatGPT can make virtual assistants and chatbots more effective at answering questions, providing customer service and entertaining users. In educational contexts, it can support educators and students in crafting and accessing quality educational content assembled from multiple reliable sources. Or, on the other hand, it can complicate and deceive, providing opportunities to cheat alongside hallucinatory fake information that confounds the learning process.

Virtual influencers provide a vivid example of human–machine entanglements. They are digital characters created in computer graphics software, virtually embodied in human-like or nonhuman-like bodily forms, then given a personality and made accessible on media platforms for the purpose of influence. Virtual influencers today include a variety of fantasy bodily forms. Figure 3.3 provides a selected overview of the variety of current virtual influencers' embodiments. These include (1) hyperreal virtual characters such as Kami, the first virtual girl with Down syndrome; (2) the anime-like pigtailed teenage pop icon Hatsune Miku; (3) more imaginative characters such as the bad bunny Guggimon; (4) the computer-generated cat Banbo Kitty; and (5) the funny animated sausage Nobody Sausage. The variety of virtual characters responds to people's increasingly sophisticated and diversified needs and desires. Virtual influencers were originally designed as fancy, beautiful creatures inhabiting the realm of fashion, beauty and lifestyle, intended to elicit aspirational identification in consumers (Kozinets et al., 2023).

Today, an increasing number of virtual influencers are generated with an educational purpose. Their appearance is less fancy and more creative, whimsical, light-hearted and funny. This is the case with Kami, for instance, the first virtual girl aimed at a cultural normalisation of Down Syndrome in social media discourse.

Figure 3.3 A variety of virtual influencers' embodiments.
Source: Photograph by the authors

Kami is the brainchild of Down Syndrome International (DSi), which teamed up with the creative agency Forsman & Bodenfors (F&B) and the global digital modelling agency The Diigitals. With the introduction of Kami, the educational idea was that of making the metaverse a space for everybody. And creating Kami also represents an educational challenge for brands to think into the future and follow her groundbreaking example of making the digital space a more inclusive and friendly place where disability finally becomes valorised and normalised. Kami is ultimately the result of a collaboration driven by the Down syndrome community. In this regard, for Kami to offer a credible representation of real women with Down syndrome, a panel of over 100 young women volunteers with Down syndrome from 16 different countries were consulted to collaborate on her creation as a virtual model—acting as the faces, physiques, gestures, voices and personalities that Kami would embody (Kozinets et al., 2023, p. 331).

Another educational example is Maria, the first Mexican virtual influencer. Her posts aim to inform people about environmentally responsible consumption, interspecies love and inclusive behaviours. A final example is provided by Bee, a virtual insect. She is the first virtual influencer bee and is dedicated to educating Gen Zers to embrace consumption practices that protect bees from extinction. Through the creation of Bee, the French NGO Fondation de France has undertaken a global acculturating attempt to teach young consumers in the world something positive and valuable about respect, acceptance and diversity. With Bee, the lessons are structured to highlight the threats to the natural world and its endangered animals and insects in an entertaining, simple and imaginative way. This is achieved through the use of straightforward

storytelling and a visually attractive narrative performed on social media platforms by a photorealistic 3D rendering of a large bee that draws from the cartoonish tradition of humanising bees.

Educational virtual influencers open up opportunities for extending the study and the use of virtual characters. For instance, virtual influencers could be introduced as virtual assistants to teachers used to carry out and interact with students on routine tasks, or also to support teachers in delivering complex or boring content in an entertaining modality. Research could explore these contexts and applications, providing better guidance on their usage and building upon the rising stream of literature (Daley & Pennington, 2020; Gubareva & Lopes, 2020) that has opened the stage for investigating the application of AI-based virtual assistants in educational settings for aspects such as student advice (Currie et al., 2016), personal learning management systems (Nenkov et al., 2016) and gamified learning (Subhash & Cudney, 2018).

But which challenges do these increasingly intimate entanglements between humans and machines pose to netnography? To understand these new technocultural worlds extending into metaverses inhabited by computer-animated humans, animals and other digital avatars of all kinds, netnography might embrace a more-than-human approach (Kozinets, 2024; Lugosi & Quinton, 2018). More-than-human designates an ontological approach recognising the agency and impact of nonhuman actors in influencing social phenomena. In addition, a more-than-human ontology conceives of structures such as social media platforms, roles such as influencers and creators, narratives/stories and posts, emotional resources and systems such as factories and markets as being coconstituted with the processes, flows and relations that create, sustain or undermine them (Kozinets, 2024, p. 5; Kozinets et al., 2021).

Embracing a more-than-human approach turns netnography into an agentic research force, 'an energised, electrified research force that incorporates both human and nonhuman shapes and sensitivities, senses and sensibilities' (Gambetti & Kozinets, 2022, p. 7). This type of research force establishes increasingly meaningful and expanded connections with the many contexts surrounding it and in which it is embodied. A more-than-human approach allows netnographers to capture the meanings and the expressive capacities of the new bodily forms, personalities and sensitivities of novel virtual embodiments, such as social robots, virtual assistants and virtual influencers. As Kozinets argues (2024, p. 4), a more-than-human netnography is equipped to respond to the following questions: How do various digital representations of life replace actual manifestations of life? How do these representations elicit people's desires, passions and fantasies? How is capitalism and commercialisation involved and how is it baked into technological processes such as algorithms and platforms? What effects do these have on education and society?

Finally, a more-than-human netnography is also challenged to adjust to the novel agentic capacities of nonhuman actors and machines. Netnographers are increasingly studying technologically mediated social spaces wherein

human actions and conversations are intertwined or even replaced by nonhuman ones. Given the deeply human essence of netnography, this means that netnographers need to adapt their sensitivities so as to understand these new cultural norms, new rituals and new emotional vocabularies (Gambetti, 2021, p. 312). For instance, netnographers might consider diving deeply into the extensive transmedia science fiction culture tradition to be able to capture the cognitive and emotional nuances of the interactions between humans and technological forms, such as cyborgs, machines, robots and even aliens. This knowledge could prove very useful in equipping netnographers with a sensitivity that allows them to grasp effects such as the 'uncanny valley', which explains why and how people are both attracted to and repulsed by humanised machines and robots (Arsenyan & Mirowska, 2021). Netnographers might also study and share the various 'tells' that AI chatbots seem to manifest, like ChatGPT's annoying need to end written entries with 'in conclusion' or using the word 'intricate' to describe almost everything.

Conclusion: A Call to Leave the Comfort Zone

An unprecedented new range of technocultural phenomena is emerging and having an impact on how people connect, learn, build their identities, socialise and educate one another and themselves. As they do so, new avenues of innovation are arising for netnographers conducting research in educational settings. Teachers, students, professional staff and educational institutions overall are increasingly affected by new digital and social media platforms and devices. Educational practices are co-evolving alongside these technologies and technocultures. As they do so, netnography and its rigorous six-movement approach provide education researchers with a means to investigate these important changes.

Netnography offers educational researchers a novel toolkit allowing them to move beyond the traditional boundaries of extant educational settings and examine the important new realms of educational technoculture. Applying netnography in education may help develop fresh insights that can lead to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the vast variety of contemporary educational phenomena. As learning institutions become increasingly technological, as teachers adapt and use various technological and online tools and as students and lifelong learners increasingly expand their educational experiences within, between and beyond traditional modalities, netnography will be there to help researchers keep pace with these rapid and thrilling changes to the realm of education.

References

Alnwairan, S., Aldajani, I., & Alshraideh, M. (2022). Measuring the academic students' performance at the University of Jordan using netnography methodology. In I. M. AlDajani & M. Leiner (Eds.), *Reconciliation, heritage and social inclusion in the Middle East and North Africa* (pp. 129–143). Springer.

Arsenyan, J., & Mirowska, A. (2021). Almost human? A comparative case study on the social media presence of virtual influencers. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies*, *155*, 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhcs.2021.102694
Beccanulli, A. A., Biraghi, S., Gambetti, R. C., (2024). Netnography to unconver the new aesthetic of the zoomie. In *Proceedings of the 57° Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences (HICSS),* pp. 2278–2287. DOI: 978-0-9981331-7-1
Chen, Y. Y. (2023). *Exploratory investigation on the discourse of 'China,' 'Mainland,' and 'Mainland China' in science education: A case study of one university by taking campusnography and netnography as methodology.* http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4444186
Cronin, C. (2017). Openness and praxis: Exploring the use of open educational practices in higher education. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, *18*(5). https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v18i5.3096
Currie, E., Harvey, P. H., Daryanani, P., Augusto, J. C., Arif, R., & Ali, A. (2016). An investigation into the efficacy of avatar-based systems for student advice. *EAI*, *3*(11), 151450.
Daley, S., & Pennington, J. (2020). Alexa the teacher's pet? A review of research on virtual assistants in education. In T. Bastiaens (Ed.), *EdMedia + innovate learning* (pp. 138–146). AACE.
Eaton, P. W., & Pasquini, L. A. (2020). Networked practices in higher education: A netnography of the #AcAdv chat community. *The Internet and Higher Education*, *45*, 100723. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2019.100723
Gambetti, R. (2021). Netnography, digital habitus and technocultural capital. In R. V. Kozinets & R. Gambetti (Eds.), *Netnography unlimited* (pp. 293–319). Routledge.
Gambetti, R. C., & Kozinets, R. V. (2022). Agentic netnography. *New Trends in Qualitative Research*, *10*, 1–15.
Geertz, C. (2008). Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. In T. Oakes & P. L. Price (Eds.), *The cultural geography reader* (pp. 41–51). Routledge.
Gikas, J., & Grant, M. M. (2013). Mobile computing devices in higher education: Student perspectives on learning with cellphones, smartphones & social media. *The Internet and Higher Education*, *19*, 18–26. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2013.06.002
Gubareva, R., & Lopes, R. P. (2020). Virtual assistants for learning: A systematic literature review. *CSEDU*, (1), 97–103. https://doi.org/10.5220/0009417600970103
Hammersley, M. (2021). *Classroom ethnography: Empirical and methodological essays.* Routledge.
Hanell, F., & Severson, P. J. (2023). An open educational resource for doing netnography in the digital arts and humanities. *Education for Information*, *39*, 155–172. https://doi.org10.3233/EFI-230024
Haraway, D. (1991). *Simians, cyborgs and women: The reinvention of nature.* Routledge.
Harwati, L. N. (2019). Ethnographic and case study approaches: Philosophical and methodological analysis. *International Journal of Education & Literacy Studies*, *7*(2). https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.7n.2p.150
Hjorth, L., & Cumiskey, K. M. (2018). Affective mobile spectres: Understanding the lives of mobile media images of the dead. In Z. Papacharissi (Ed.), *A networked self and platforms, stories, connections* (pp. 127–140). Routledge.
Hodder, I. (2011). Human-thing entanglement: Towards an integrated archaeological perspective. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, *17*(1), 154–177. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9655.2010.01674.x
Hodder, I. (2012). *Entangled: An archaeology of the relationships between humans and things.* Wiley.
Hoffman, D. L., & Novak, T. P. (2018). Consumer and object experience in the internet of things: An assemblage theory approach. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *44*(6), 1178–1204. https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucx105

Howard, L. (2021). Auto-netnography in education: Unfettered and unshackled. In R. V. Kozinets & R. Gambetti (Eds.), *Netnography unlimited* (pp. 217–240). Routledge.

Influencer Marketing Hub. (2023). *13 emerging social media graphic design trends that will define 2023.* https://influencermarketinghub.com/social-media-graphic-design-trends/

Kozinets, R. V. (2002). Can consumers escape the market? Emancipatory illuminations from burning man. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *29*(1), 20–38. https://doi.org/10.1086/339919

Kozinets, R. V. (2019). Consuming technocultures: An extended JCR curation. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *46*(3), 620–627. https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucz034

Kozinets, R. V. (2020). *Netnography: The essential guide to qualitative social media research.* SAGE.

Kozinets, R. V. (2024). Researching chatbots, platforms, and the metaverse: Understanding today's netnography. In R. Belk & C. Otnes (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research methods in marketing* (2nd ed., pp. 1–13). Edward Elgar Publishing.

Kozinets, R., Gretzel, U., & Dinhopl, A. (2017). Self in art/self as art: Museum selfies as identity work. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *8*, 731. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00731

Kozinets, R. V., Ferreira, D. A., & Chimenti, P. (2021). How do platforms empower consumers? Insights from the affordances and constraints of reclame aqui. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *48*(3), 428–455. https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucab014

Kozinets, R. V., Gretzel, U., & Gambetti, R. (2023). *Influencers and creators: Business, culture and practice*. SAGE.

Kozinets, R. V., & Gretzel, U. (2024). Netnography evolved: New contexts, scope, procedures and sensibilities. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 104, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annals.2023.103693

Kulavuz-Onal, D., & Vásquez, C. (2013). Reconceptualising fieldwork in a netnography of an online community of English language teachers. *Ethnography and Education*, *8*(2), 224–238. https://doi.org/10.1080/17457823.2013.792511

Latour, B. (1993). *We have never been modern*. Harvard University Press.

Latour, B. (2005). *Reassembling the social: An introduction to actor-network-theory.* Oxford University Press.

Lugosi, P., & Quinton, S. (2018). More-than-human netnography. *Journal of Marketing Management*, *34*(3–4), 287–313. https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2018.1431303

McNiff, S. (1998). *Art-based research.* Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

McNiff, S. (2008). Art-based research. In J. G. Knowles & A. L. Cole (Eds.), *Handbook of the arts in qualitative research: Perspectives, methodologies, examples, and issues* (pp. 29–40). SAGE.

Muljana, P. S., Staudt Willet, K. B., & Luo, T. (2022). Adjusting sails for changing winds: Exploring reddit use for professional purposes in higher education. *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*, *34*(3), 679–707. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12528-022-09317-2

Nenkov, N., Dimitrov, G., Dyachenko, Y., & Koeva, K. (2016). Artificial intelligence technologies for personnel learning management systems. In *Proceedings of the IEEE 8th. International Conference on Intelligent Systems (IS)*. https://doi.org/10.1109/IS.2016.7737420

O'Reilly, N. J., Rahinel, R., Foster, M. K., & Patterson, M. (2007). Connecting in megaclasses: The netnographic advantage. *Journal of Marketing Education*, *29*(1), 69–84. https://doi.org/10.1177/0273475307299583

Penley, C., & Ross, A. (Eds.). (1991). *Technoculture*. University of Minnesota Press.

Roblyer, M. D., McDaniel, M., Webb, M., Herman, J., & Witty, J. V. (2010). Findings on Facebook in higher education. *The Internet and Higher Education*, *13*(3), 134–140. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2010.03.002

Saadatdoost, R., Sim, A. T. H., Mittal, N., Jafarkarimi, H., & Hee, J. M. (2014). A netnography study of MOOC community. *PACIS*, 116.

Sherry, J., & Kozinets, R. V. (2021). Being at burning man. In A. Joy (Ed.), *Art, luxury fashion, deluxe hospitality services and fine wines: Ethics, aesthetics and marketing insights*. De Gruyter.

Skukauskaitė, A., Rupšiene, L., Player-Koro, C., & Beach, D. (2017). Rethinking educational ethnography: Methodological quandaries and possibilities. *Acta Paedagogica Vilnensia*, *39*, 9–14.

Subhash, S., & Cudney, E. A. (2018). Gamified learning in higher education: A systematic review of the literature. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *87*, 192–206. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2018.05.028

Tess, P. A. (2013). The role of social media in higher education classes (real and virtual)—A literature review. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *29*(5), A60–A68. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2012.12.032

Veletsianos, G., & Kimmons, R. (2013). Scholars and faculty members' lived experiences in online social networks. *The Internet and Higher Education*, *16*, 43–50. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2012.01.004

Veletsianos, G., & Stewart, B. (2016). Scholars' open practices: Selective and intentional self-disclosures and the reasons behind them. *Social Media + Society*, *2*(3). https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305116664222

Wallace, R., Costello, L., & Devine, A. (2018). Netnographic slog: Creative elicitation strategies to encourage participation in an online community of practice for early education and care. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *17*(1).

4 Old and New Varieties of Materialism in Ethnographic Research

Ethnography Matters

Tobias Röhl

Introduction

Bruno Latour's essay 'Can We Get Our Materialism Back, Please?' from 2007 begins with the simple statement, quoted here:

> Something has happened to materialism.
>
> (Latour, 2007, p. 138)

Hereunder, I take up this statement and outline what this 'something' is, what is new about it and how it affects ethnography. I then delineate developments in social sciences and ethnography that have led to a renewed interest in materiality. These new forms of materialism differ, however, in important respects from older versions. Before I discuss any varieties of such new materialism, I outline different forms of conventional materialism. Finally, I show how ethnography has dealt historically with material entities and how it is being challenged by new forms of materialism.

Old (and Not So Old) Materialisms

For the purposes of this chapter, I identify three forms of conventional materialism from which new materialisms differ. The first kind of 'old' materialism is the common conception of materiality prevalent in modern thought, which I classify as *technical materialism*. Latour identifies this kind of materialism mainly with technical sciences and their notion of material entities as passive objects that can be manipulated at will (Latour, 2007). At the same time, objects can exert force on actors and determine their actions from the outside.

Coming from Marxism, *historical materialism* as the second form of this is interested in the socioeconomic foundations of modern societies (Fox & Alldred, 2017, p. 5; Lee, 2020, p. 18). Here, materialism is about (industrial) production and consumption as material means of societies to distribute wealth. All social relations between actors are explained through their foundation in the underlying system of production. Ideas and beliefs disguise this material basis as the actual root of social inequalities and power structures.

DOI: 10.4324/9781032629384-6

This chapter has been made available under a (CC-BY-NC-ND) 4.0 license.

Third, a common perspective on materiality can be found in what may be termed *cultural materialism*. Material entities are 'projection screens' (Latour, 1996, p. 235) for human actors. They are only seen as something that is socially relevant insofar as they receive meaning as symbols beyond their materiality. Things such as items of clothing thus 'reflect social status, and serve as a basis for subtle games of distinction' (Latour, 1996, p. 235). A grill to speak through in a post office thus 'becomes a sign, different from plate glass, barriers, bay windows, landscaped offices and thus signaling a difference in status, or signifying the modernization of public service' (Latour, 1996, p. 235). In this vein, material culture studies often relegate things to signs pointing to something else. Consequently, the 'comfort of things' (Miller, 2008) lies in their capability to lend meaning to our lives as opposed to their practical usefulness: Random items can remind us of past holidays and relationships, and decorative objects can fill our apartments with a festive mood.

All these different forms of conventional materialism fail to grasp materiality from the perspective of new materialisms. *Historical materialism* focuses on the macro level and neglects the micro-logical dimension of materiality in practice (Fox & Alldred, 2017, p. 5). *Technical materialism*, on the other hand, 'appears in retrospect as a rather idealist definition of matter and its various agencies' (Latour, 2007, p. 138). Consequently, in this kind of materialism, '"objects" [are] mistaken for things' (Latour, 2007, p. 138). Instead of looking at material entities in their entanglement with other entities, they are envisioned as distant and isolated objects. For Latour, this has to do with the conflation of epistemology and ontology, in which the former obscures the latter. Things are conceived via their geometrical representation in technical drawings. A representational naturalism is at work here, in which the drawing is confused with the actual thing in the world. This not only neglects the concrete reality of things but also leaves out the work and the difficulties of drawing as a practice. In reference to Heidegger's notion of a 'thing', Latour distinguishes 'thin objects' from 'thick things' (Latour, 2007, p. 140 ff.). While the former disregards the constant work needed to create the things in the here and now, the latter acknowledges the 'assemblage' of different elements that need to be gathered for the thing to come into existence and stay in existence. With this distinction, of course, Latour also harks back to Clifford Geertz' notion of a 'thin' and 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973). 'Thin' descriptions lack the richness of ethnographic detail and claim to present just the 'bare facts'. Yet with both things and cultural phenomena, we need 'thickness' to give us objects, people and practices in their situated contexts and their relations to each other.

Finally, *cultural materialism* is criticised for neglecting the practical and rather material dimension of material entities by looking only at their semiotic qualities (Latour, 1996). This is akin to a position that David Lockwood (1960) once took against certain Marxist accounts of working-class lifestyles in 1950's United Kingdom. The growing number of washing machines in the households of the British working class was seen by some as a cultural

appropriation of a middle-class lifestyle by the workers and their families. Yet, as Lockwood succinctly phrased it, 'A washing machine is a washing machine is a washing machine' (Lockwood, 1960, p. 253). Washing machines were not (only) a mere symbol of a middle-class lifestyle, but obviously also convenient and practical tools that made the lives of working-class families easier.

With these different forms of conventional materialism and their failure to grasp materiality in mind, we can now consider what new materialisms have to offer. As I argue hereunder, different varieties of new materialisms aim to grasp material entities in their relevance for practice without resorting to either a material determinism or a view that relegates them to arbitrary signifiers.

Varieties of New Materialisms

For some time now, the term 'new materialism' has gained traction in social sciences (Coole & Frost, 2010; Fox & Alldred, 2017; Hoppe & Lemke, 2023). By characterising this kind of materialism as 'new', adherents of such a viewpoint deliberately position themselves in opposition to older varieties. Yet, varieties of new materialisms do not share a homogenous theoretical or methodological foundation and can be characterised as 'a loose gathering of rejects' (Kissmann & van Loon, 2019, p. 4) that oppose common conceptions about the social and material world. They share, for example, the belief that both spheres cannot be seen as distinct from each other but must be thought of as being intertwined. Consequently, essential materialism is criticised because it is too deterministic and mechanistic, aiming to explain phenomena by referring to materiality as elemental structures and building blocks of the world (Hoppe & Lemke, 2023, p. 12 f.). In contrast, new materialisms situate themselves in between the two poles of materiality as a determining force and as a passive object. Material entities are seen as active, resisting attempts to tame them, and at the same time, their agency does not reside in itself but is conceived as being an effect of concrete assemblages of which they are a part. The notion of 'assemblage' is thus often invoked to denote that different entities can only be grasped through their relations to other entities (Fox & Alldred, 2017). Among such varieties of new materialisms, the following three can, for example, be identified. And although some of them are already a few decades old and quite established, they are all 'new' insofar as they diverge from the 'old' materialisms of the 19th and 20th centuries:

Actor–network theory (ANT)—translation: The turn to materiality in social sciences owes much to authors associated with the actor–network theory (Akrich, 1992; Callon, 1986; Latour, 2005; Law, 2002). The notion of 'symmetric' anthropology highlights that human and nonhuman actors should be methodologically treated on a par (Latour, 1994). They both can only act as part of networks composed of a number of heterogeneous actors. With ANT, material entities are not mere carriers of meanings or tools but actors that actively contribute and make a difference. All of

the actors in the network are mediated and thus changed. When someone uses a gun, both the gunman and the gun itself are transformed via their connection.

Postphenomenology—human–technology relations: Postphenomenological perspectives on materiality emphasise the intricate connections between humans, objects and the world. The philosopher of technology, Don Ihde, coined the term 'postphenomenology' (Ihde, 1993) to articulate his view on technology, distancing himself from Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, which primarily focused on subjective consciousness and its intentionality towards the world. In contrast, postphenomenology uses the notion of 'technological intentionality' (Ihde, 1990, p. 141) to denote that our being in the world is already technologically mediated in human–technology relations (Verbeek, 2005). Technological objects play a mediating role between humans and the world, impacting on our experiences in various ways. This mediation is characterised by both the 'amplification' and 'reduction' of experiences, as well as the 'invitation' and 'inhibition' of actions (Verbeek, 2005, pp. 195–199). We must consider which actions become possible due to these objects and which ones are hindered. Moreover, we need to explore how these objects interact with our sensory perception and alter our experiences, ultimately shaping our relationship with the world. To that end, postphenomenology identifies different types of human–technology relations in which material entities are present differently to human beings—sometimes in the background of our perception, while at other times as something that we encounter as the other.

Feminist New Materialism—becoming: The term New Materialism (with capital letters) in its narrow sense is most commonly associated with a number of different feminist authors, such as Karen Barad (2007) and Rosi Braidotti (2013)—and sometimes even going back to include Donna Haraway's earlier work (1991; see, e.g., the introduction to New Materialism by Hoppe & Lemke, 2023). Karen Barad's 'agential realism' (2007) advocates a radically relational ontology in which there are no given objects. In a way similar to Braidotti (2013), Barad stresses 'becoming' as the ontological modus of the universe. Here, materiality and material entities are not the foundational elements, but rather the outcomes of 'a stabilising and destabilising process of iterative intra-activity' (Barad, 2007, p. 210). In contrast to interaction, 'intra-action' does not rest on the assumption of pregiven entities but considers phenomena in their becoming. With the concept of 'diffraction', Barad advocates for a nonrepresentational methodology (Hoppe & Lemke, 2023, p. 62 f.): Drawing on quantum physics, Barad reminds us that observing is not a neutral act in which we can represent something out there, but rather that the act of observation itself is implicated in how we experience the object. Indeed, we create something new. Diffraction does not reflect its object but brings researcher and researched object into a specific being.

For some, the different varieties included here are not necessarily seen as being part of a new materialism, and they solely consist of variety number three (Coole & Frost, 2010; Hoppe & Lemke, 2023). Others have, however, argued for a broader conception along the lines proposed here (Fox & Alldred, 2017; Kissmann & van Loon, 2019). While these different forms of new materialism differ quite widely, they do share at least three characteristic traits: They extend agency to include various nonhuman entities and they follow a nondualistic and relational ontology (see also Budde et al. in this volume).

Extended agency: New materialist approaches assume that agency is not limited to human actors. Instead, they assign agency to other entities, such as technologies (Latour, 1991; Verbeek, 2005) and infrastructures (Jensen & Morita, 2017), material substances (Hahn & Soentgen, 2011), animals (see Ameli in this volume; DeMello, 2012; Haraway, 2007), microorganisms (Latour, 2001) and plants (Hartigan, 2019), as indeed even god (Chambon, 2020). This is often associated with a rather minimal definition of action and actor. With Bruno Latour, for example, an actor is 'any thing that does modify a state of affairs by making a difference' (Latour, 2005, p. 71), and thus, this cuts all ties to human meaning and intentionality. Karen Barad's 'agential realism' (2007) is not interested in fixed entities (such as subjects and objects), but rather in all kinds of social and natural phenomena and how they come into being (Hoppe & Lemke, 2023, pp. 64–69). In contrast, postphenomenology still places human beings and their entanglement with the world at the forefront while acknowledging the role of technology in human lifeworlds and technological extensions of human bodies.

Nondualistic: Closely related to extended agency is a nondualistic outlook on the world. New materialisms are counteracted by Cartesian dualism, which divides the world neatly into opposing doubles such as nature/culture, subject/object and micro/macro. Instead, they opt for 'flat ontologies' (Latour, 2005; Schatzki, 2016) in which everything is on the same plane of existence and no prior hierarchy is assumed between the different entities and/or planes. Consequently, the dualities are the result of the practices enacting them. Accordingly, social/material order is seen as an 'ongoing accomplishment'—to borrow a phrase by Harold Garfinkel (1967, p. 1) here.

Relationality: In more general terms, such flat ontologies are thus also 'process ontologies' (Schadler, 2019). This is evidenced most strikingly by Karen Barad's notion of 'becoming' (outlined earlier). Postphenomenology advocates for an 'interrelational ontology' (Ihde, 2009, p. 44) in which humans and their technologies become what they are through their relations to each other. And ANT is well-known as an example of a 'theory of arrangement' (Schatzki, 2002, p. xii) in which every element receives its status by being part of a particular network with other elements. For new materialist approaches, there is no such thing as a stable entity or phenomenon. Everything is only temporarily performing as this particular entity.

Ethnography and Materialisms Old and New

How are these different materialisms related to ethnography? Ethnography evolved as a project that was fundamentally opposed to older forms of academic and nonacademic inquiries about cultures in the Global South. One of the seminal figures of ethnographic fieldwork, Bronisław Malinowski, famously argued for experiencing culture first-hand, instead of collecting accounts of others:

> Living in the village with no other business but to follow native life, one sees the customs, ceremonies and transactions over and over again, one has examples of their beliefs as they are actually lived through, and the full body and blood of actual native life fills out soon the skeleton of abstract constructions.
>
> (Malinowski, 1922, p. 21)

The goal of ethnography is then 'to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realise *his* vision of *his* world' (Malinowski, 1922, p. 24).[1] This (rather) subjectivist or emic view of culture was in deliberate opposition to objectivist or etic standpoints in anthropology. This comes with an interest in

> phenomena of great importance which cannot possibly be recorded by questioning or computing documents, but have to be observed in their full actuality. Let us call them *the imponderabilia of actual life*. Here belong such things as the routine of a man's working day, the details of his care of the body, of the manner of taking food and preparing it; the tone of conversational and social life around the village fires, the existence of strong friendships or hostilities, and of passing sympathies and dislikes between people; the subtle yet unmistakable manner in which personal vanities and ambitions are reflected in the behaviour of the individual and in the emotional reactions of those who surround him.
>
> (Malinowski, 1922, p. 21)

Investigating the 'imponderabilia of actual life' is about consciously neglecting material aspects, except as part of people's routines. Since material objects were identified with an objective standpoint, ethnography refrained from putting material entities at the centre stage of research.

> The differences between peoples were no longer seen to inhere in things (for example, blood and brain size, weapons and costumes). Culture was disentangled from race. The significance of artifacts was to be found in related beliefs and social processes. Objects came to be seen as (sometimes, merely) manifestations or products of ideology and behavior. . . . Objects, once the stuff of ethnology, had become epiphenomena.
>
> (Bean, 1987, p. 552)

Material objects were not entirely abandoned but treated as peripheral to culture. They only mattered insofar as people assigned meaning to them (for a similar position in sociology see, e.g., Blumer, 1986). Instead of a 'superficial registration of details', this was 'an effort at penetrating the mental attitude expressed in them' (Malinowski, 1922, p. 21). Classical ethnography is thus not interested in objects as such but in the cultural meaning assigned to and displayed by them. In that regard, early ethnography followed a form of *cultural materialism*, as outlined earlier. Many years later, this still holds true for many ethnographic accounts, for example, when Clifford Geertz talks about ethnography's interest in culture as a 'web of significance' (Geertz, 1973, p. 5).

Nevertheless, ethnography became the method of choice for early laboratory studies in the field of science and technology studies (Knorr-Cetina, 1981; Latour & Woolgar, 1979). Instead of looking at scientific discourse and the 'context of persuasion', the very 'context of discovery' itself was made an object of enquiry. Consequently, researchers visited the places where scientists discovered their phenomena and their laws. With its focus on lived culture and practices, researchers could observe the work of scientists at their lab benches—with this necessarily involving a whole range of material artefacts that were seen as playing a fundamental role in the epistemic practice of the sciences. In the wake of such developments and in the aftermath of later developments such as the 'practice turn' (Schatzki & Knorr-Cetina, 2000) in the social sciences, some have opted to rebrand ethnography as 'praxiography' (Bueger, 2020; Mol, 2002), thus avoiding the problematic notion of *ethnos* and emphasising the focus on practice as the relevant unit of analysis. Ethnography is then not so much about following people and their culture but about 'following practices, objects and instruments' (Latour, 1996, p. 240).

New materialist approaches follow in the footsteps of this turn to practice and materiality especially. ANT makes us aware that human actions rely on a number of material prerequisites and challenges humanist notions of agency by understanding action as part of chains of translations. Postphenomenology emphasises that our bodily experience is bound to material tools and consequently never neutral. And Feminist New Materialism is a constant reminder to follow the becoming of things, instead of their being. In this vein, new areas of inquiry for ethnographic research present themselves and thus offer new insights for many fields. What comes into view contradicts common conceptions of modern culture: the agency of a diverse set of nonhuman entities, the entanglement and inseparability of nature and culture, and the relationality of material and social phenomena alike.

A 'diffractive ethnography' (Gullion, 2018) can thus provide a route for researchers interested in going beyond established cultural divisions. Availing of Barad's concept of diffraction requires us to think about the assemblage, including researchers and their tools, as well as their research objects and the assemblages they are part of. In this way, we can ask questions about the micropolitics embodied in these assemblages (Fox & Alldred, 2017, pp. 151–175).

Conventional ethnography, for example, often 'privileges researcher account and analysis of an event' (Fox & Alldred, 2017, p. 165). It is the researchers' interpretations of lived cultures that are represented in ethnographic publications, the ethnographers' experiences serving as a proxy for the native's point of view. In a 'diffractive ethnography', this would become part of the analysis itself. And indeed, recent publications have taken into account the tools and techniques that ethnographers use to position themselves in and towards the field, such as fieldnotes (Kalthoff, 2013; Schindler & Schäfer, 2021), clothes (Laube, 2021) and video recordings (Liegl & Schindler, 2013).

Yet, such broad statements often leave researchers wondering how to observe and analyse from a new materialist perspective. How can one conduct such research? Grit Höppner (2022, also in this volume), for example, has developed a new method called 'silhouettes analysis' in order to see things differently. By transforming images into silhouettes, she is able to escape common assumptions about her research field (gerontology) and challenge the nature/culture divide. Instead of immediately seeing human bodies and their artefacts in one image, the researcher becomes alienated from these assumptions and can think about different ways of becoming a body. The aging body can thus be viewed as an assemblage of different material elements beyond the skin, incorporating tools and the surrounding environment.

Conclusion

So, what is new about new materialisms? New materialisms challenge and renew the way we look at things and allow us to include a diverse set of phenomena and entities in our analysis without relegating them to epiphenomena. They also facilitate thinking about how we as researchers with our tools are (made) present in the field and positioned inside of it. The question is whether we need a new epistemology or even ontology when researching material entities—or if we often cannot arrive at the same conclusions with the already established tools of interpretative social research (Keller, 2019). Others also question whether an 'ontological turn' (Holbraad & Pedersen, 2017) is possible at all since we—as socialised and embodied human beings—are already entangled in a world full of meaning and interpretation (Lettow, 2017). The use of methodological concepts such as diffraction is, however, certainly worthwhile when we investigate how different groups of people conceive and work with the nature/culture divide (Descola, 2009).

There are, however, instances when the conceptual and methodological baggage might be too big to justify for results that do not diverge that much from 'traditional' ethnographies. If one can come to the same conclusions without new concepts, why should one use them? What is needed is an openness in ethnographic research, in which research questions and the phenomena we are interested in determine conceptual tools and methodologies. Whether ethnographic methodologies adhere to old or new forms of materialism, they should allow researchers to see things anew and help them

in 'fighting familiarity' (Delamont & Atkinson, 1995). And at the same time, the field itself should be adequately given a voice (Hirschauer, 2006). It is between those two poles that ethnographic research must situate itself: by using theoretical concepts to see things in a new light, on the one hand, and by being open to what the field itself has to offer.

Note

1 This notion of the native's point of view in Malinoswki's work is not free from racist undertones and other problematic misrepresentations of 'savage life'—especially his diary warranted a critical examination of his work (see, e.g., Rapport, 1990; Symmons-Symonolewicz, 1982).

References

Akrich, M. (1992). *The de-scription of technical objects*. MIT Press.
Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the universe halfway: Quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning*. Duke University Press.
Bean, S. S. (1987). Review: The objects of anthropology. *American Ethnologist*, *14*(3), 552–559.
Blumer, H. (1986). *Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method*. University of California Press.
Braidotti, R. (2013). *Metamorphoses: Towards a materialist theory of becoming*. John Wiley & Sons.
Bueger, C. (2020). *Praxiography*. SAGE.
Callon, M. (1986). Some elements of a sociology of translation. Domestication of the scallops and the fishermen of St Brieuc bay. In J. Law (Ed.), *Power, action and belief. A new sociology of knowledge?* (pp. 196–223). Routledge.
Chambon, M. (2020). *Actor-network theory and the anthropology of Christianity making Christ present in China*. Palgrave Macmillan.
Coole, D., & Frost, S. (Eds.). (2010). *New materialisms: Ontology, agency, and politics*. Duke University Press.
Delamont, S., & Atkinson, P. (1995). *Fighting familiarity. Essays on education and ethnography*. Hampton.
DeMello, M. (2012). *Animals and society: An introduction to human-animal studies*. Columbia University Press.
Descola, P. (2009). Human natures. *Social Anthropology*, *17*(2), 145–157. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8676.2009.00063.x
Fox, N., & Alldred, P. (2017). *Sociology and the new materialism: Theory, research, action*. SAGE.
Garfinkel, H. (1967). *Studies in ethnomethodology*. Prentice Hall.
Geertz, C. (1973). Thick description. Towards an interpretive theory of culture. In *The interpretation of cultures* (pp. 3–30). Basic Books.
Gullion, J. S. (2018). *Diffractive ethnography: Social sciences and the ontological turn*. Routledge.
Hahn, H. P., & Soentgen, J. (2011). Acknowledging substances. Looking at the hidden side of the material world. *Philosophy & Technology*, *24*(1), 19–33. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-010-0001-8
Haraway, D. J. (1991). *Simians, cyborgs, and women: The reinvention of nature*. Routledge.
Haraway, D. J. (2007). *When species meet*. University of Minnesota Press.

Hartigan, J., Jr. (2019). Plants as ethnographic subjects. *Anthropology Today*, *35*(2), 1–2. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8322.12491

Hirschauer, S. (2006). Putting things into words. Ethnographic description and the silence of the social. *Human Studies*, *29*(4), 413–441. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10746-007-9041-1

Holbraad, M., & Pedersen, M. A. (2017). *The ontological turn: An anthropological exposition* (Reprint ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Hoppe, K., & Lemke, T. (2023). *Neue Materialismen zur Einführung* (3rd ed.). Junius Verlag.

Höppner, G. (2022). Silhouettes analysis: A posthuman method for visualizing and examining the material world. *Qualitative Research*, *22*(4), 578–593. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794121999015

Ihde, D. (1990). *Technology and the lifeworld. From garden to earth*. Indiana University Press.

Ihde, D. (1993). *Postphenomenology. Essays in the postmodern context*. Northwestern University Press.

Ihde, D. (2009). *Postphenomenology and technoscience. The Peking University lectures*. State University of New York Press.

Jensen, C. B., & Morita, A. (2017). Infrastructures as ontological experiments. *Ethnos*, *82*(4), 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1080/00141844.2015.1107607

Kalthoff, H. (2013). Field notes: Ethnographic writing reconsidered. *Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory*, *14*(3), 271–283. https://doi.org/10.1080/1600910X.2013.838976

Keller, R. (2019). New materialism? A view from sociology of knowledge. In U. T. Kissmann & J. van Loon (Eds.), *Discussing new materialism: Methodological implications for the study of materialities* (pp. 151–169). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-22300-7_8

Kissmann, U. T., & van Loon, J. (2019). New materialism and its methodological consequences: An introduction. In U. T. Kissmann & J. van Loon (Eds.), *Discussing new materialism: Methodological implications for the study of materialities* (pp. 3–18). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-22300-7_1

Knorr-Cetina, K. (1981). *The manufacture of knowledge: An essay on the constructivist and contextual nature of science*. Pergamon Press.

Latour, B. (1991). Technology is society made durable. In J. Law (Ed.), *A sociology of monsters. Essays on power, technology, and domination* (pp. 103–131). Routledge.

Latour, B. (1994). On technical mediation. Philosophy, sociology, genealogy. *Common Knowledge*, *3*(2), 29–64.

Latour, B. (1996). On interobjectivity. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, *3*(4), 228–245.

Latour, B. (2001). *Pasteur: Guerre et paix des microbes, suivi de Irréductions*. La Découverte.

Latour, B. (2005). *Reassembling the social. An introduction to actor-network-theory*. Oxford University Press.

Latour, B. (2007). Can we get our materialism back, please? *Isis*, *98*, 138–142.

Latour, B., & Woolgar, S. (1979). *Laboratory life. The construction of scientific facts*. Princeton University Press.

Laube, S. (2021). Material practices of ethnographic presence. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *50*(1), 57–76. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241620968268

Law, J. (2002). *Aircraft stories: Decentering the object in technoscience*. Duke University Press.

Lee, N. (2020). Studying anthropocene childhoods: Which materialism? In S. Bollig, L. Alberth, & L. Schindler (Eds.), *Materialitäten der Kindheit. Körper, Dinge, Räume* (pp. 15–30). Springer.

Lettow, S. (2017). Turning the turn: New materialism, historical materialism and critical theory. *Thesis Eleven*, *140*(1), 106–121. https://doi.org/10.1177/0725513616683853

Liegl, M., & Schindler, L. (2013). Media assemblages, ethnographic vis-ability and the enactment of video in sociological research. *Distinktion: Scandinavian Journal of Social Theory*, *14*(3), 254–270. https://doi.org/10.1080/1600910X.2013.863791

Lockwood, D. (1960). The 'new working class'. *European Journal of Sociology*, *1*(2), 248–259.

Malinowski, B. (1922). *Argonauts of the Western Pacific. An account of native enterprise and adventure in the archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea*. Routledge.

Miller, D. (2008). *The comfort of things*. Polity Press.

Mol, A. (2002). *The body multiple. Ontology in medical practice*. Duke University Press.

Rapport, N. (1990). Surely everything has already been said about Malinowski's diary! *Anthropology Today*, *6*(1), 5–9. https://doi.org/10.2307/3033181

Schadler, C. (2019). Enactments of a new materialist ethnography: Methodological framework and research processes. *Qualitative Research*, *19*(2), 215–230. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794117748877

Schatzki, T. R. (2002). *The site of the social. A philosophical account of the constitution of social life and change*. Pennsylvania State University Press.

Schatzki, T. R. (2016). Practice theory as flat ontology. In G. Spaargaren, D. Weenink, & M. Lamers (Eds.), *Practice theory and research. Exploring the dynamics of social life*. Routledge.

Schatzki, T. R., & Knorr-Cetina, K. (Eds.). (2000). *The practice turn in contemporary theory*. Routledge.

Schindler, L., & Schäfer, H. (2021). Practices of writing in ethnographic work. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *50*(1), 11–32. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241620923396

Symmons-Symonolewicz, K. (1982). The ethnographer and his savages: An intellectual history of Malinowski's diary. *The Polish Review*, *27*(1/2), 92–98.

Verbeek, P.-P. (2005). *What things do. Philosophical reflections on technology, agency, and design*. Penn State University Press.

5 Multispecies Ethnography in Educational Research

Changing Perspective in Animal-Assisted Education

Katharina Ameli

Introduction

Multispecies relationships in the form of multispecies collaboration are found in differing facets and cultural contexts. The social differentiation of humans, animals, nature(s) and cultures can be traced back to ambivalent and culturally shaped views of and role assignments to animals and nature(s) (Bell, 2012; Jones, 2019). Interdisciplinary debates in human–animal studies, critical animal studies, environmental education or approaches to nature cultures have already highlighted relevant intended and unintended interdependencies at the interface of humans, animals and natures (in the Anthropocene) (Ameli, 2022). The example of the relationship between humans and animals shows that animals are assigned different roles by humans, ranging from the perception of animals as food to partners in everyday life.

The multiple crises of the 21st century have also contributed to the complex and multilayered interdependencies between the human and the more-than-human world being illuminated from the perspectives of various disciplines (Becker, 2016; Sebastian, 2017). The more-than-human world is understood as the earthly world surrounding us (Abram, 1996), of which human beings are a part and for which they are (co-)responsible (Sauvé, 1996, p. 10ff.). This includes, for example, water, soil, air, stones, trees or animals (Michel-Fabian, 2010, p. 47).

Nature(s) and animals are also accorded special significance in educational settings in the context of environmental education (McPhie & Clarke, 2020; Goller & Rieckmann, 2022). Children's contact with their environment and direct sensory interaction with the more-than-human world is cited as a key to overcoming the multiple crises mentioned (Cudword & Lumber, 2021; Roberts et al., 2020). Nature and the experience of nature are understood to be an integral part of educational processes that shape the future and contribute to adapting educational curricula to the local and global world (Roberts et al., 2020; Carvalho et al., 2020; Kopnina, 2017). Environmental educational debates in particular aim for teachers to be understood as key actors in reflexive active and passive contact with nature and animals (Goller & Rieckmann, 2022, p. 19; Tsevreni, 2021, p. 14). However, these experiences are

DOI: 10.4324/9781032629384-7

This chapter has been made available under a (CC-BY-NC-ND) 4.0 license.

influenced by the teachers' own relationships with nature and the environment, such that teacher training must include their own relationships with nature and animals (Tsevreni, 2021, p. 14).

In summary, nature and animal-based teaching–learning processes can be categorised as a multispecies education. The inclusion of animals and nature is linked to the acknowledgement of the agency of actors from the more-than-human world. Agency in this context means the ability to act and interact (socially) in a multispecies network (McFarland & Hediger, 2009). Multispecies education is characterised by teaching and learning with, through and by actors of the more-than-human world, so that they passively or actively become part of the educational interaction (Ameli, 2022). Passive participation in educational contexts occurs, for example, through the inclusion of animals in texts and through storytelling (see, e.g., De Mello, 2010). An active inclusion of nature and animals enables direct (sensual) observations of and learning processes from actors of the more-than-human world. This conception allows for a special form of reflection, permitting role assignments, social constructions and individual meanings of nature(s) and animals to be questioned and classified (Ameli, 2022). At the same time, sensory observations allow us to analyse how lives are interwoven and affected by each other. Through this, all educational participants—whether directly observable or not—become more visible and considered as part of a teaching–learning network.

Animal-assisted education is an active form of multispecies education. In recent years, this area has shown enormous growth—often subsumed under the term animal-assisted interventions or therapy. In the analysis of animal-assisted pedagogy, holistic and interdisciplinary approaches prove helpful—especially with regard to the needs and forms of interaction of the animals used. Multispecies ethnography has emerged here as a research method with potential (Ogden et al., 2013). It recognises the inseparability between the human and the more-than-human world and expands ethnography to include a shift in perspectives to actors of the more-than-human world. Through this, perspectives and aspects of a multidimensional mosaic of the human and the more-than-human world, and thus of intra- and interspecific animal-assisted multispecies collaborations, are revealed (Ameli, 2022).

This is precisely the point of departure for this contribution. It approaches animal-assisted education using multispecies ethnography. First, by addressing the complementary and competing perspectives of disciplines, an approach is gained of perspectives and research methods from other disciplines, such as biology. This represents a new ethnographic approach because it blurs boundaries between social and natural sciences by combining insights from the applied ethology of animals with insights from the humanities. In terms of multispecies ethnography, this means that an analysis of the effects of a classroom dog in a school has to be observed and explored from two different perspectives. On the one hand, this allows the recording of concrete observations of the effects of the animal on humans. On the other hand, the effects of people on the animal used have to be observed and analysed at the same time.

This new approach is necessary in order for humans and animals to encounter each other on an equal level in the analysis of animal-assisted interactions. By including animals as coresearchers, this helps and allows us to consider their voices and perspectives. This is not only interesting from a research perspective but also relevant in terms of compliance with animal welfare.

Animal-Assisted Pedagogy

The therapeutic use of animals was first mentioned in the 18th century in written records of the so-called York Retreat (Serpell, 2015). Thanks to Boris M. Levinson (1997), as well as the founding of the Delta Society (now called Petpartners) and the International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organisations (IAHAIO, n.d.), the attention accorded to animal-based interactions increased. The general term of animal-assisted interventions emerged and initially referred to animal-assisted therapy and animal-assisted activities (Vernooij & Schneider, 2018, p. 44 ff.). A large number of offers from associations, organisations and private individuals have emerged in recent decades that are dedicated to promoting animal-assisted use in social settings in the form of further training events or concrete interactions with various target groups.

According to the IAHAIO, animal-assisted interventions can be defined as 'a goal-oriented and structured intervention that intentionally includes or incorporates animals in health, education and human services (e.g., social work) for the purpose of therapeutic gains in humans' (IAHAIO, 2018). The subdivision of animal-assisted services or animal-assisted interventions internationally is categorised into animal-assisted therapy, animal-assisted pedagogy, animal-assisted activities or animal-assisted support. In addition, other terms are used that are more specific to the animal used, such as dog-assisted pedagogy in schools or equine-assisted coaching in human resource development (Ameli, 2016).

To summarise, animal-assisted pedagogy describes professionalised interactions between people and animals that are implemented in a goal-oriented, target group-centred manner and in compliance with animal protection, animal welfare and animal law (Vernoij/Schneider 2018).

The main objective of animal-assisted pedagogy is generally understood to be the initiation of learning processes that improve and support the abilities and skills of the audience. Animal-assisted pedagogy is applied both inside and outside schools as a method to stimulate development processes and give individual support. Here, support means that individual support plans and objectives are integrated, which contributes to the promotion of the social and emotional competences of the audience. Subareas of didactics are also integrated into animal-assisted pedagogy (IAHAIO, 2018; Waschulewski, 2015).

Contrary to the definition of Vernooij and Schneider (2018), a specifically trained animal is not automatically included in the definition of animal-assisted pedagogy. The reason for this is that the practice shows only a requirement for

certain individual species. For example, there are currently no courses for bees, chickens or donkeys to become specially trained animals for educational settings. By contrast, however, exams for dogs and horses are offered by various organisations and private individuals. Instead of speaking about the specific training of the animal, it is necessary to change one's own perspective here. This offers the possibility of encountering animals and seeing them as actors and coeducators (in the sense of independently acting beings). Only the interlocking interaction of all actors involved permits the possibility of addressing the areas of influence of animal-assisted education at all and promoting development in the fields of motor skills/body awareness, cognition/learning, language/communication, emotions, sociability/social behaviour and perception/concentration (Waschulewski, 2015).

The increase in animal-assisted services is based on effects that focus on those pedagogical areas that have been described and documented in the context of studies on animal interactions and pet ownership, or on the basis of evaluations of animal-assisted services (Beetz et al., 2012). Theoretical explanations, such as the biophilia hypothesis (Wilson, 1984) and the 'du-evidence' (Wiedenmann, 1998), as well as the theory of attachment (Julius et al., 2013) or communication approaches (Chitic et al., 2012; Rodrigo-Claverol, 2020), have supported the explanations of these effects (Beetz et al., 2012). The professionalised implementation refers here to the triad of experts, animals and clients that allows professionalised animal-assisted interaction. All actors—experts, animals and clients—are involved in the interaction and contribute needs and behaviours (Ameli, 2016, p. 96). With regard to animals, this means that they—just like humans—can experience stress and strain. This can be recognised via parameters such as flight or aggressive behaviour. The perception of stress in animals depends on individual factors, including genetics, character or state of health. In addition, there are environmental influences, such as possible social support from conspecifics or the existence of escape possibilities. The needs of each animal must be considered species-specifically and individually. Thus, it is obvious that concrete ethological knowledge about the respective species and their individual needs becomes necessary in human–animal interactions in education (Hornung & Dulleck, 2016, p. 239 ff.). In order to do justice to all the actors and consider animal welfare for the animals, an inclusion of the animal perspective is necessary when using multispecies ethnography. Perspective here does not mean a complete understanding of what animals feel or sense. Rather, it is about having attunement (Despret, 2004) between people and animals. It is about an approach to taking the animal's standpoint and noting what happens, what the animal might feel and what we as researchers would probably feel in its place, always in feedback with the existing interaction and relationship with each other.

Although this is an essential factor, currently the animal perspective has not been researched sufficiently in these fields of research (Krämer & Ameli, 2022). The increase in interdisciplinary collaborations and the opening up of

disciplines in this direction will enhance the view of the importance and perspective of animals and allow the educational discipline of animal welfare to be rethought and linked to multispecies ethnography.

On the Approach of Animal Perspectives in Animal-Assisted Pedagogy With the Help of Multispecies Ethnography

Bruno Latour, in his remarks in 'Where am I? Lessons from the Lockdown' (2021), emphasises yet again the existing networks between the human and the more-than-human world. His conclusion reveals—abstractly speaking—the adoption of the animal perspective. He claims that becoming an animal provides a more down-to-earth view and ends with the conclusion that no environment exists[1] (Latour, 2021). And when including the animal perspective, the entire social morphology has to be considered, for example, the distribution, language, socialisation or training. Multispecies ethnography in animal-assisted pedagogy permits the archiving, inventorying, collecting, mapping and cataloguing of social facts regarding the human–animal bond (Mauss, 2013, p. 16).

The adoption of the animal perspective in the context of animal-assisted pedagogy is interesting in two ways. First, the analysis of the animal perspective in a research context allows us to map new findings for animal-assisted research. Second, the consideration of the animal's perspective offers indications for improved animal welfare in practice because this is accorded a different focus. The use of multispecies ethnography thus permits clarification of the connections between theory and practice.

Multispecies Ethnography

A concrete methodological approach to creating the necessary change of perspective and adopting an approximate animal perspective is provided by multispecies ethnography. It is recognised as a subfield of cultural anthropology yet is currently neither nationally nor internationally established for animal-assisted pedagogy. The theoretical basis of multispecies ethnography is grounded in symbolic interactionism (Irvine, 2004; Goffman, 1974), actor–network theory (Latour, 2008) and indigenous theories (Aikenhead & Mitchell, 2011; Berkes et al., 2000). Multispecies ethnography focuses on the ways in which humans, animals, natures and cultures are interdependent, responding to the increased interest in research in the field of nature cultures and human–animal studies. Multispecies ethnography recognises the close interconnectedness and inseparability of the human and the more-than-human world and documents cultures, practices and perspectives in a multispecies world (Hammersley, 2006, p. 4). Compared to classical ethnography, it provides different and innovative perspectives of actors from the more-than-human world, allowing for multidimensional interdependencies. Multidimensionality means having consideration of the range of characteristics that define the essence of an animal in animal-assisted pedagogy.

The method applied is therefore to analyse the practice of the individual actors, document the animal perspective and thus permit new possibilities in the exploration of hidden parameters from the animal perspective. Taking an animal's standpoint involves an observation about how animals communicate behaviourally, how they interact with humans and how humans interact with them. It is obvious that documenting an animal's perspective from a researcher's standpoint by observing, describing and explaining its behaviour through human-centred language does not mean we can become an animal. Nevertheless, observing animals and understanding people as part of their group, especially in animal-assisted education, is a key element of multispecies ethnography. One option consists of practicing a sensory exchange with animals (Pink, 2015) and analysing in detail which interactions and behaviour the animal shows or which sensations it displays. Although we cannot fully feel what the animal feels, the possibility of observation still remains. One should question which personality traits the animal reveals in the interactions, which interactions are shown and how are they displayed concretely. Through the researchers' perspectives, their views are connected with their thoughts about the animals' perspectives in which their stories and the needs of animals are increasingly brought into focus. By taking a cross-disciplinary approach, for example, with the support of an ethogram, a more objective method is included that helps reflect and question the look at the animal (Ameli, 2022). Furthermore, teachers in animal-assisted education are important sources of information, as they have knowledge about their animal(s).

Currently, multispecies ethnography has already been applied in the analysis of interactions between elephants and trainers (Ameli, 2022), beekeepers and bees (Moore & Kosut, 2014), and children and insects (Taylor & Pacini-Ketchabaw, 2015), as well as in the context of wild pedagogies (Kamsteeg, 2022).

The application of multispecies ethnography requires a holistic approach by researching with all the senses so that emotional, moral, economic, social, political and cultural aspects are included (Aikenhead & Mitchell, 2011, p. 79). Empathy, inclusion and the I–you relationship represent the cornerstones for the functioning application of multispecies ethnography (Ameli, 2022; Snauwaert, 2009, p. 98ff.). Empathy means the ability to put oneself interspecifically in the other actors perspective and to map what the other actor shows and feels. Inclusion implies the acceptance of the other actors ways of seeing and acting in the world. The I–you relationship refers to the relationship between the I and the you. The 'you' represents the view of the other in itself through intersubjectivity and transsubjectivity (Ameli, 2022). An essential tool for becoming one with (Haraway, 2018) animals is seen in anthropomorphising, which can be used as a heuristic for forming new identities and perspectives through feelings, experiences and knowledge in discursive and nondiscursive animal stories (Wild, 2013; Despret, 2004, p. 130).

Although this involves the adoption of principles of anthropomorphism in the form of cross-perspective actions, for that, it remains open to what extent a

nonhuman perspective can be understood, as well as which positive and negative projections are linked to it. However, the 'reflexive consciousness' is part of the documentation intended to address the animal's world from different perspectives (Serpell, 2005, p. 123).

The most frequent criticism arises particularly regarding the question of how animals speak and communicate (Mütherich, 2004). This does not always exclusively mean a linguistic utterance. Instead, the reaction of an animal can already be understood as an (emotional) form of communication, which, in turn, allows behaviour to be classified through observation—and this is a core element of (multispecies) ethnography. Behaviour describes something that humans and animals have in common (Schimank, 2010, p. 28). This has already been emphasised in ethological research (Bohnet, 2012). However, the inclusion of ethological research results on different animal species should not obscure the fact that there are also limits to communication between humans and animals. Nevertheless, this circumstance does not exempt researchers from (methodologically) including animals in research nor from bringing visibility to their stories. Although not all perspectives of an animal can be deciphered, there is still an approximation of its perspective. This means that a turning towards the living creature is practised, and its capacity for action and kinds of interaction are differentiated in the form of agency. Thus, a success factor in the implementation of multispecies ethnography is taking a cross-disciplinary approach and having great openness in integrating empathy and the sensory experiences from the animal perspective in the research.

On the Implementation of Animal-Assisted Multispecies Ethnography in Animal-Assisted Pedagogy

In a manner similar to classical ethnography, multispecies ethnography pursues 'catching the phenomenon' (Thomas, 2019) in the selection of the elements to be analysed. The advantage of multispecies ethnography consists of encountering the perspective of the actors of a multispecies world. For animal-assisted pedagogy, this can be illustrated by the example of a classroom dog. First, (theoretical) concepts from education, sociology, biology and veterinary medicine are interwoven. This is important for overcoming disciplinary boundaries. Moreover, all the subareas of the triad (professional, animal and target group) described earlier are mapped through multispecies ethnography. The human perspective is mapped via human-oriented disciplines, while the animal perspective benefits from the natural and life sciences. A change to and widening of perspectives poses the greatest challenge for researchers, as current research illustrates (Zola, 2021; Parathian, 2018).

In the first step, it is therefore necessary to initiate a change of the perspective by preparing the core values of empathy, inclusion and the I–you relationship. This establishes a basis for access to the field. In the second step, the agency of the animal is to be considered and one's own attitude is to be questioned in this regard. In the next step, observations and existing

knowledge from the disciplines are studied and applied to the research object. Data material can be created from (participatory) observations, interviews, (self-)experience reports, documents or videos, with the premise that all three actors are equally considered (Ameli, 2022). In practice, this means a breakdown of existing rules and values (Haraway, 2018, p. 91 ff.) by processing and analysing findings about the pedagogical effect of animals on children in an educationally oriented interaction and supplementing them with ethological findings from biology and veterinary medicine for the animal perspective (Ameli, 2022). The documentation is ultimately effected from the three perspectives named earlier. To illustrate this, the example of a participatory observation of pedagogical individual support with a child is used hereunder. In this case, the current state of the studies reveals a far-reaching focus on the effects of animals on humans. This means that the interactions often analyse the positive effects of animals on humans (Allen Shykoff & Izzo, 2001; Beetz et al., 2012; Headey, 2008).

A concrete example of a situation in an animal-assisted education setting is the use of the specially trained classroom dog 'Terry'—whereby the focus is on its agency within the interaction. This can be used to illustrate multispecies ethnography from the perspective of both humans and animals. Terry is a 9-year-old dog with a diagnosed painful musculoskeletal system. Twice a week it accompanies Tanja, a primary school teacher, to the school. In this case, the teacher's pedagogical goal is to improve the children's motor skills and balance with the help of the dog.

The goal of the interaction between the students and the dog is to complete a parkour (Hornung & Dulleck, 2016, p. 154). For this purpose, the teacher has set up jumping hoops, slalom poles, hurdles and tunnels in the school's outdoor area. The majority of the children show great joy and obedience by completing the parkour. One child tells the teacher that the dog followed her closely. During the interactions, the teacher shows foresight and gives the children concrete instructions on how to complete the parkour. She also tells the children how to reward the dog for its behaviour.

Although all three actors should be considered, the special aspect of multispecies ethnography consists of the animal's perspective, which represents the focus here for clarification purposes. The observation of the dog from an animal's perspective shows that it starts the parkour with a slight lameness of its hindquarters. This is further aggravated by jumping about with the children. In the interaction with the children, the dog exhibits constant panting, as well as repeated yawning and shaking. The concrete observation of the dog provides indications—without preparing an ethogram, an analysis tool for animal behaviour in the natural sciences—that the dog is showing stress and pain signals. The analysis of the situation—having regard to the standards of professional animal-assisted education currently being discussed and with reference to the individual characteristics of the dog, as well as the body language signals displayed—concludes that the task area chosen (a parkour here) is unsuitable for the dog with its painful musculoskeletal system.

Instead, it indicates a strain on the animal that, in practice, negates its protection and needs. In the theoretical reception, attention has to be paid to the body language of the dog so as to recognise stress. One way of observing this in a differentiated manner within the framework of a multispecies ethnography would be to prepare an ethogram to complement the animal's behaviour. An ethogram describes a detailed and precise inventory of all the behaviours of an animal in its environment. This form of observation permits a formal description of the behaviours, their evaluation and the classification of the functions of the behaviours (Feddersen-Petersen, 2008). Another option would be to interview the owner and an expert on animal behaviour so as to combine the researchers' observations with other human-like animal perspectives.

This ultimately permits an approach of inclusion in educational research and ethnography that excludes any perspective of actions and behaviours of animals as individuals and considers them in the context of their own cultures and in relation to actors of the more-than-human world. Multispecies ethnography thus allows us to integrate behavioural–ethological aspects and to reflect on acting and interacting with each other from differing perspectives.

For the animal-assisted field, reference is always made to the analysis of signs in body language, which can indicate potential stress signals on the part of a dog in animal-assisted work. These would, for example, consist of appeasement gestures, such as licking the nose and lifting the paw, as well as jumping actions in the form of yawning, shaking or blinking (Hornung & Dulleck, 2016, p. 252).

Consequently, it becomes clear for the analysis of animal-assisted pedagogy that ethological knowledge is needed to capture the animal's perspective within educational interactions. This alone enables researchers to approach the experiences, feelings, perspectives and interests of the animal—using the example of the dog here—and tell its story. A change of perspective in the sense of multispecies ethnography thus requires a good degree of knowledge of different kinds—experiential knowledge as well as expert knowledge of differing provenance—about the different species, their needs and characteristics (Fenske, 2017, p. 23). Researching with all the senses (Pink, 2015) is highly important in the analysis of multispecies collaborations, as emotional, moral, economic, social, political and cultural aspects of the human and the more-than-human world are linked (Aikenhead & Michell, 2011, p. 79). Only by becoming involved with the actors of the more-than-human world (Haraway, 2018, p. 141) by putting oneself in the dog's visual position and observing its behaviour can interspecies communication and animal welfare be assured.

Ultimately, this consists of two aspects. First, it is an essential impulse for animal-assisted education. At the same time, the inclusion of animals and their stories offers new methodical approaches, because—despite the limits stated—a recognition of an animal's story arises and that always in regard to its relationship with others.

Conclusion

The interest in educational analyses of animal-assisted interactions with the help of ethnography, as well as practical offers in this regard, has increased strongly in recent decades. The use of multispecies ethnography permits a stronger focus on the animal's perspective in research and practice. Using multispecies ethnography calls for a dialogical attitude by researchers, through which an interaction occurs. This enables a reflection of hierarchies and power relations from an individual interpretative lens: How do we interact with and influence each other? What does this mean for animal participants?

The inclusion of the I–you relationship allows researchers to determine identity in the relationship with the other, in this case the animal, and to affirm it in its individuality. Animal actors are granted the ability to show behaviour to other human actors (Buber, 1997). The application of the multispecies ethnography approach lets the researcher gain a perspective of (domestic) animals' behaviour, sensations and habits in social settings and map the analysis of human–animal relations in a holistic way. Not only does this enable the inclusion of animals in the scientific methods of the social sciences, humanities, cultural studies and education, but it also addresses concrete aspects of animal welfare, as well as the social perceptions of animals.

Note

1 The theory that no environment exists is based on the assumption that the human and more-than-human worlds are inseparable.

References

Abram, D. (1996). *Spell of the sensuous*. Random House.

Aikenhead, G., & Michell, H. (2011). *Bridging cultures: Indigenous and scientific ways of knowing nature*. Pearson.

Allen, K., Shykoff, B. E., & Izzo, J. L. (2001). Pet ownership, but not ace inhibitor therapy, blunts home blood pressure responses to mental stress. *Hypertension*, *38*, 815–820.

Ameli, K. (2016). *Die Professionalisierung tiergestützter Dienstleistungen: Von der Weiterbildung zum eigenständigen Beruf*. wbv.

Ameli, K. (2022). *Multispecies ethnography: Methodology of a holistic research approach of humans, animals, nature, and culture*. Lexington Books.

Becker, E. (2016). *Keine Gesellschaft ohne Natur*. Campus.

Beetz, A., Uvnäs-Moberg, K., Julius, H., & Kotrschal, K. (2012). Psychosocial and psychophysiological effects of human-animal interactions: The possible role of oxytocin. *Frontiers in Psychology*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2012.00234

Bell, M. M. (2012). *An invitation to environmental sociology*. SAGE.

Berkes, F., Colding, J., & Folke, C. (2000). Rediscovery of traditional ecological knowledge as adaptive management. *Ecological Applications*, *10*(5), 1251–1262.

Bohnet, W. (2012). Ethologie: Die Bedürfnisse Der Tiere in Der der Mensch-Tier-Beziehung. In C. Otterstedt & M. Rosenberger (Eds.), *Gefährten—Konkurrenten—Verwandte: Die Mensch-Tier-Beziehung im Wissenschaftlichen Diskurs* (pp. 26–48). Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Buber, M. (1997). Ich und Du. In *Das Dialogische Prinzip* (8th ed.). Lambert Schneider.
Carvalho, I. C., Steil, C. A., & Gonzaga, F. (2020). Learning from a more-than-human perspective: Plants as teachers. *Journal of Environmental Education*, *51*(2), 144–155. https://doi.org/10.1080/00958964.2020.172626610.1080/00958964.2020.1726266
Chitic, V., Rusu, A. S., & Szamoskozi, A. (2012). The effects of animal assisted therapy on communication and social skills: A meta-analysis. *Transylvanian Journal of Psychology*, *1*, 2–13.
Cudworth, D., & Lumber, R. (2021). The importance of forest school and the pathways to nature connection. *Journal of Outdoor and Environmental Education*, *24*, 71–85. https://doi-org.ezproxy.uni-giessen.de/10.1007/s42322-021-00074-x10.1007/s42322-021-00074-x
DeMello, M. (2010). *Teaching the animal: Human-animal studies across the disciplines.* Lantern Publishing.
Despret, V. (2004). The body we care for: Figures of anthropo-zoo-genesis. *Body and Society*, *10*(2/3), 111–134.
Feddersen-Petersen, D. U. (2008). *Ausdrucksverhalten beim Hund: Mimik und Körpersprache, Kommunikation und Verständigung*. Kosmos.
Fenske, M. (2017). Der Stich der Biene: Multispecies Forschung als methodische Herausforderung. *Kuckuck: Notizen zur Alltagskultur*, *32–17*(2), 22–25.
Goffman, E. (1974). *Das Individuum im öffentlichen Austausch—Mikrostudien zur öffentlichen Ordnung*. Suhrkamp.
Goller, A., & Rieckmann, M. (2022). What do we know about teacher educators' perceptions of education for sustainable development? *Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability*, *24*(1), 19–34. https://doi.org/10.2478/jtes-2022-000310.2478/jtes-2022-0003
Hammersley, M. (2006). Ethnography: Problems and prospects. *Ethnography and Education*, *1*(1), 3–14.
Haraway, D. (2018). *Unruhig bleiben*. Campus.
Headey, B., Na, F., & Zheng, R. (2008). Pet dogs benefit owners' health: A "natural experiment" in China. *Social Indicators Research*, *87*, 481–493.
Hornung, J., & Dulleck, A. S. (2016). Der Einfluss tiergestützter Dienstleistungen auf das Wohlbefinden des Tieres. In K. Ameli, A. S. Dulleck, & T. Brüsemeister (Eds.), *Grundlagen tiergestützter Dienstleistungen* (pp. 239–272). tredition.
IAHAIO. (2018). The IAHAIO definitions for animal assisted intervention and guidelines for wellness of animals involved in AAI IAHAIO WHITE PAPER. https://iahaio.org/best-practice/white-paper-on-animal-assisted-interventions/
IAHAIO. (n.d.). *About us*. https://iahaio.org/history/
Irvine, L. (2004). *If you tame me. Understanding our connection with animals.* Temple University Press.
Jones, O. (2019). Wer melkt die Kühe in Maesgwyn? Animalische Landschaften und Affekte. In F. Gesing, M. Knecht, M. Flitner, & K. Amelang (Eds.), *NaturenKulturen* (pp. 287–320). transcript Verlag.
Julius, H., Beetz, A., Kotrschal, K., Turner, D., & Uvnäs-Moberg, K. (2013). *Attachment to pets: An integrative view of human-animal relationships with implications for therapeutic practice.* Hogrefe.
Kamsteeg, F. (2022). Wild pedagogies for doing multispecies organizational ethnography: Using the tracking craft of the southern African San. In H. Wels (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of animal organization studies* (pp. 159–178). Oxford University Press.
Kopnina, H. (2017). Future scenarios for sustainability education: The future we want. In A. Wals, J. Weakland, & P. Blaze Corcoran (Eds.), *Envisioning futures for*

environmental and sustainability education (pp. 129–140). Wageningen Academic Publishers.
Krämer, S., & Ameli, K. (2022). Gasteditorial: Tierschutz im Fokus—ein kritischer Blick auf tiergestützte Interaktionen. *Tierethik*, *14*(2), 8–18.
Latour, B. (2008). *Reassembling the social. An introduction to actor-network-theory.* Oxford University Press.
Latour, B. (2021). *Wo bin ich? Lektionen aus dem Lockdown*. Suhrkamp.
Levinson, M., & Mallon, G. P. (1997). *Pet-oriented child psychotherapy* (2nd ed.). Charles C. Thomas Pub Ltd. Print.
Mauss, M. (2013). *Handbuch der Ethnographie.* Wilhelm Fink Verlag.
McFarland, S., & Hediger, R. (2009). Approaching the agency of other animals: An introduction. In S. E. McFarland (Ed.), *Animals and agency: An interdisciplinary exploration* (pp. 1–20). Leiden.
McPhie, J., & Clarke, D. (2020). Nature matters: Diffracting a keystone concept of environmental education research—just for kicks. *Environmental Education Research*, *26*(9–10), 1509–1526. https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2018.1531 38710.1080/13504622.2018.1531387
Michel-Fabian, P. (2010). Ethik im Naturschutz—eine Skizze. In J. Fehrle, R. Heinz, & K. Müller (Eds.), *Herausforderung Biologie* (pp. 47–61). LIT.
Moore, L. J., & Kosut, M. (2014). Among the colony: Ethnographic fieldwork, urban bees and intra-species mindfulness. *Ethnography*, *15*(4), 516–539.
Mütherich, B. (2004). *Die Problematik der Mensch-Tier-Beziehung in der Soziologie: Weber, Marx und die Frankfurter Schule.* LIT.
Ogden, L. A., Hall, B., & Tanita, K. (2013). Animals, plants, people and things: A review of multispecies ethnography. *Environment and Society*, (4), 5–24.
Parathian, E. H. (2018). Breaking through disciplinary barriers: Human—Wildlife interactions and multispecies ethnography. *International Journal of Primatology*, 749–775.
Pink, S. (2015). *Doing visual ethnography.* SAGE.
Roberts, A., Hinds, J., & Camic, P. (2020). Nature activities and wellbeing in children and young people: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, *20*, 298–318.
Rodrigo-Claverol, M., Malla-Clua, B., Marquilles-Bonet, C., Sol, J., Jové-Naval, J., Sole-Pujol, M., & Ortega-Bravo, M. (2020). Animal-assisted therapy improves communication and mobility among institutionalized people with cognitive impairment. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *17*(16), 5899.
Sauvé, L. (1996). Environmental education and sustainable development: A further appraisal. *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education*, *1*, 7–34.
Schimank, U. (2010). *Handeln und Strukturen*. Juventa.
Sebastian, M. (2017). Deadly efficiency—the impact of capitalist production on the meat industry, slaughterhouse workers and nonhuman animals. In D. Nibert (Ed.), *Animal oppression and capitalism* (pp. 167–183). Praeger Press.
Serpell, J. A. (2005). People in disguise. Anthropomorphism and the human-pet relationship. In L. Daston & G. Mitman (Eds.), *Thinking with animals.* Columbia University Press.
Serpell, J. A. (2015). Animal-assisted interventions in historical perspective. In A. Fine (Ed.), *Handbook on animal-assisted therapy* (4th ed., pp. 11–19). Academic Press.
Snauwaert, D. T. (2009). Human rights and cosmopolitan democratic education. *Philosophical Studies in Education*, *40*, 94–103.
Taylor, A., & Pacini-Ketchabaw, V. (2015). Learning with children, ants, and worms in the anthropocene: Towards a common world pedagogy of multispecies vulnerability. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, *23*(4), 507–529.
Thomas, S. (2019). *Ethnographie.* Springer.

Tsevreni, I. (2021). Nature journaling as a holistic pedagogical experience with the more-than-human world. *Journal of Environmental Education*, *52*(1), 14–24.
Vernooij, M. A., & Schneider, S. (2018). *Handbuch der tiergestützten Interventionen: Grundlagen, Konzepte, Praxisfelder*. Quelle & Meyer.
Waschulewski, U. (2015). Wie kommt das Tier ins Inventar? Oder: Von den Schwierigkeiten der Dokumentation und Evaluation tiergestützter Interventionen im Bereich Schule. *Sonderpädagogische Förderung heute*, *3*, 269–295.
Wiedenmann, R. E. (1998). Die Fremdheit der Tiere: Zum Wandel der Ambivalenz von Mensch-Tier Beziehungen. In P. Münch & R. Walz (Eds.), *Tiere und Menschen: Geschichte und Aktualität eines prekären Verhältnisses* (pp. 351–377). Schöningh.
Wild, M. (2013). Der Mensch und andere Tiere. In K. P. Liessmann (Ed.), *Tiere: Der Mensch und seine Natur* (pp. 48–67). Paul Zsolnay.
Wilson, E. O. (1984). *Biophilia*. Harvard University Press.
Zola, L. (2021). Cunning as a wolf. Multispecies relations between humans and wolves in Eastern Siberia: Multispecies relations between humans and wolves in Eastern Siberia. *Lagoonscapes. The Venice Journal of Environmental Humanities*, *1*(2), 263–280.

6 Overcoming 'Intellectual Aristocracy' Through Bildung

A New Look at the Work of Wilhelm von Humboldt by Bringing Together the History of Education and the History of Ethnography

Ruprecht Mattig

Introduction

Although history is about the 'old times', it is inseparable from 'the new'. Any serious historical account is new in that it either takes note of previously unknown historical facts or interprets 'old' facts from a new perspective, or both. At times, new approaches to history itself may even emerge. History is a fundamental way in which human beings relate to the world, insofar as 'new' experiences are always interpreted against past experiences. All of this applies, of course, to the history of ethnography and the history of education, two approaches that usually have nearly no contact. This essay brings these approaches together by taking a new look at a prominent figure in intellectual history whose own ethnographic research has received too little attention so far: the Prussian Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835).

Numerous accounts have been written about Humboldt and his work, in both German and international scholarship. In educational studies, Humboldt is regarded as a neo-humanist who proposed a pioneering liberal ideal of *Bildung* and, as a politician in the early 19th century, developed plans to modernise Prussian education (e.g., Albrecht & Hill, 2023, for the international discourse; Benner, 2023, for the German one). But what Humboldt's ideal of *Bildung* is about exactly remains controversial. A sketch of the various interpretations can illustrate this and provide background for the analysis that follows. Spranger (1909) initiated a lasting tradition of interpretation, positing that Humboldt's concept of *Bildung* is about the unfolding of the human inner self. Roth, grasping Spranger's basic idea, criticised this vision of Humboldt as elitist and out of touch with the world of the common people, calling Humboldt an 'intellectual aristocrat' (Roth, 1971, p. 293). To some extent still in line with Spranger's interpretation, when reflecting on an empirical approach to *Bildung*, Koller (2018, pp. 11–15) considers Humboldt's conception a good theoretical starting point but critiques Humboldt's lack of concern for empirical research. Although the elitist charge against Humboldt has already been relativised (e.g., Benner, 1990), it can still be found

DOI: 10.4324/9781032629384-8

This chapter has been made available under a (CC-BY-NC-ND) 4.0 license.

in the current literature. Recently, Humboldt has been interpreted from a postcolonial perspective (Spieker & Wischmann, 2022). Here, the notion of Humboldt as an elitist thinker is taken even further in that, according to this reading, he looked down not only on the common people of his own society but also on foreign peoples: Insofar as the idea of *Bildung* was developed against the historical backdrop of colonialism, Humboldt is said to follow a 'Eurocentric narrative' (Spieker & Wischmann, 2022, p. 21) by devaluing 'raw' (Spieker & Wischmann, 2022, p. 19) peoples from a standpoint of 'superiority of European peoples or nations' (Spieker & Wischmann, 2022, p. 21).

Other lines of interpretation highlight Humboldt's interest in the diversity of life forms. Løvlie (Løvlie, 2002), for example, points out that Humboldt's notion of *Bildung* is about 'the idea of individual diversity within a global humanity' (Løvlie, 2002, p. 469). Koller (2018, pp. 11–15) argues that this interest of Humboldt is related especially to his language studies. While many accounts have been written on Humboldt's theory of *Bildung* in the history of education, almost none accord attention to his ethnographic work (except Mattig, 2019).

In terms of the history of ethnography, the picture is not easy to determine because ethnographic works are often mentioned in the history of anthropology, but the term anthropology is broader than the term ethnography. While ethnography mainly refers to empirical studies, anthropology also includes theoretical considerations. In the history of anthropology, Humboldt is often mentioned, but only in terms of his theoretical contributions (e.g., Bunzl, 1996). In the history of ethnography, it is often argued that while quasi-ethnographic work was conducted in antiquity, 'modern' ethnography does not begin until Morgan (1818–1881) or Malinowski (1884–1942) (Ugwu, 2017), which means that Humboldt does not even appear here. One exception is Harbsmeier, who mentions Humboldt's study *The Basques* and considers it one of the best German ethnographies of the early modern period (Harbsmeier, 1992, p. 429). However, Harbsmeier is mistaken by more than a hundred years about the date of publication of *The Basques*: While the correct date is 1920, he gives 1801. This may also be a hint of how little is known about Humboldt's ethnographic work in the history of ethnography (except Mattig, 2020).

Thus, against the background that Humboldt's ethnographic work is scarcely known in the history of education or in the history of ethnography, and based on my own work (Mattig, 2019, 2020), I argue that the inclusion of this 'new' part of his work casts fresh light on 'old' and current interpretations of his theory of *Bildung*. My main argument is that scrutinising Humboldt's ethnographic work reveals that the interpretation of him as an elitist intellectual aristocrat is untenable. On the contrary, on the basis of his theory of *Bildung*, he rejected intellectual aristocracy, which I elucidate in two ways: In a strict sense, Humboldt viewed with concern the emergence of a new intellectual elite in Europe. Accordingly, in his plans for educational reform, he sought to counter intellectual elitism. In a broader sense, he opposed overvaluing the intellect relative to other human capacities, for which reason empirical research was so important to him, along with theoretical reflection.

Ethnography and *Bildung*

The second half of the 18th century proved to be highly formative for the development of anthropology in Europe (Mattig, 2019, pp. 52–78). Prominent Enlightenment thinkers were interested in human diversity, which they examined and discussed in terms of 'national character' or 'race'. As was typical of the Enlightenment, these discussions were often linked to questions of liberal politics that criticised the power of the absolutist state and the church. The knowledge about other people mostly stemmed from travel reports.

From today's perspective, the intellectual efforts of the time must be seen as ambivalent. On the one hand, human diversity was acknowledged and valued; on the other, anthropology was also situated in colonial contexts and, accordingly, often steeped in Eurocentric and racist assumptions, as Niezen (2009, pp. 180–181) demonstrates with reference to Meiners (1747–1810) and Sömmering (1755–1830). How is Humboldt's way of thinking to be seen with regard to this aspect? While Niezen (2009, p. 181) claims that Humboldt was situated in a colonial world but did not share the basic assumptions of colonialism, Spieker and Wischmann (Spieker & Wischmann, 2022, pp. 21–22) hold that Humboldt developed his thinking within the colonial mindset of his time and thus transported racist ideas.

Humboldt had a deep interest in anthropological questions and soon set out to study the human character himself. In his conception of the human being, he generally used the word 'character' and rejected the concept of 'race' as overly simplistic (cf. Mattig, 2019, p. 71). For him, anthropology should comprise both theoretical considerations and empirical research (Mattig, 2019, pp. 152–173). He censured philosophers for relying too much on second-hand knowledge about other peoples from travellers; at the same time, he criticised most travel accounts for a lack of theoretical considerations. He demanded that anthropologists be both philosophers and travellers who are able to reflect upon their experiences along systematic viewpoints.

Throughout his life, he developed theoretical insights based in large part on empirical observations. As a young man, he witnessed the French Revolution in Paris in 1789, but even though he shared the liberal values of the revolution, his observations led him to develop a sceptical view. As a result, in 1792, he wrote the famous essay *The Sphere and Duties of Government*, advocating reform, rather than revolution. Here, Humboldt also developed his famous concept of *Bildung*:

> *The true end of Man, or that which is prescribed by the eternal and immutable dictates of reason, and not suggested by vague and transient desires, is the highest and most harmonious development [i.e., Bildung, from the chapter's author] of his powers to a complete and consistent whole.*
>
> *(von Humboldt, 1854, p. 11)*

Like many contemporaries, Humboldt had great interest in the ancient Greeks. However, he had a different approach in mind to the philological one that was prevalent at that time. He wanted to explore the national character of the

Greeks and thus adopt an anthropological or ethnographic approach (Mattig, 2019, pp. 133–151). Of course, the ancient Greeks could not be studied ethnographically *in situ* but only from their testimonies. His studies led him to the conclusion that the Greeks had developed their powers in an admirably high and harmonious way. Thus, his empirical study of the ancient Greek national character led Humboldt to develop his vision of *Bildung*. While most Enlightenment philosophers focused on the development of reason, that is, intellectual powers, Humboldt consistently asked how precisely the different sides of the human being—the intellect, emotions, sensuality, imagination and morality—could be constructively related to each other.

Here, we reach the deeper meaning of his methodological approach to ethnography: Ethnographers must be guided by the ideal of *Bildung* and thus physically enter the field, sensitise their senses and elaborate on what they perceive on an imaginative, as well as a theoretical level. All of the ethnographer's powers need to be developed.

While during his travel to Paris in 1789 as a young man, his observations were somewhat accidental, over the following years, Humboldt developed a systematic method for empirical research, comprising mainly the study of literature, physiognomy, ethnography and comparison (Mattig, 2019, pp. 158–166). For example, he wrote a methodological paper entitled *Plan for a Comparative Anthropology* in 1795 (GS I, pp. 377–410).[1] His diaries are filled with observations and reflections noted in accordance with this method, and he wrote several ethnographic studies, mainly about the French, the Spaniards and the Basques (Mattig, 2020). The studies I would like to particularly highlight consist of *On the Contemporary French Tragic Theatre* (GS II, pp. 377–400), published in 1800; *The Montserrat near Barcelona* (GS III, pp. 30–59), published in 1803; and the encompassing ethnography *The Basques* (GS XIII, pp. 1–195), first published posthumously in German in 1920, with an English translation released in 2013.

During his travels over roughly the first half of his life, Humboldt conducted a variety of ethnographic observations related to customs, way of life and language. On the basis of these studies, however, he then concentrated more on language, which became the main object of research in his later years (Zabaleta-Gorrotxategi, 2013, pp. XXVII–XXXVI). Today, he is often praised for his achievements in the study of language, while his original ethnographic studies are largely forgotten. Yet looking at his ethnographic work reveals that the interpretation whereby he was a pure theoretician who undertook no empirical research must be rejected. Moreover, it hints that Humboldt even deserves a place in the history of ethnography.

Ethnography in the Basque Country

While Humboldt's ethnographic works addressed a wide range of topics, including politics, economics, gender relations and language (Mattig, 2019), hereunder I focus on one aspect of his Basque studies that is significantly

related to his later educational reforms and which illustrates his supposedly elitist and colonial stance: the relationship of different social groups to each other. In countries like Germany and France, Humboldt was familiar with what he called a 'gap' (von Humboldt, 2013, p. 9) between the educated and the common people. There was no contact between these groups, and thus, he saw a new form of aristocracy emerging: 'intellectual aristocracy' (Letter to Goethe, 28 November 1799. In Bratranek, 1876, p. 151). The educated persons developed their intellectual capacities to a remarkable degree, participating in the international Enlightenment discourse of that time. The common people, however, who were able neither to read nor to write, were excluded. While many of his contemporaries did not care about the common people, or even looked down on them, Humboldt was deeply concerned that the social gap implied that nations could not form a 'complete and consistent whole'. For him, the issue was not only that the commoners would not participate in the intellectual progress of the Enlightenment but also that the educated persons were not developing their nonintellectual, that is, their bodily, emotional and imaginative capacities. *Bildung* meant that all capacities needed to be developed. Thus, he noted that the new practices of the Enlightenment, such as reading, discussing and writing letters, were detrimental to *Bildung*.

During his ethnographic fieldwork in the Basque Country in 1799 and 1801, Humboldt made remarkable observations with regard to this issue. In fact, he admired the Basque national character for a number of reasons. On the one hand, he describes the Basques as original people, almost untouched by the evils of modern civilisation, who have preserved their unique language and way of life. On the other hand, however, he observed that educated individuals were eager to bring 'many of the Enlightenment's most beneficial fruitions right into their wildest lands' (von Humboldt, 2013, p. 6) and educate the common people. Nowhere else in Europe did Humboldt perceive such a high degree of 'people's enlightenment' (*Volksaufklärung*) as among the Basques. He writes,

> *They are a people who pursue agriculture, shipping, and commerce; they do not lack physical wealth without which no ethical improvement would be possible. They have a free constitution and public debates, which are mainly held in their own vernacular, and thus have a common interest that affects everyone and to which everyone can contribute. The Basques are taken with an enthusiasm for their country and nation—which may appear slightly odd to the foreigner—to such an extent that even the more wealthy Basques, including those who receive honors and titles in Castile or hold prestigious offices, remain devoted to their home country. Here they live in very close relation with the vast masses of the people as they cannot cut themselves off from the prevailing customs and language. In this way, parts of the newer Enlightenment and education flow into the people's vernacular and their*

> *terminology, and dissociation between the classes is less obvious; in fact, in the eyes of a true Basque, these differences are entirely negligible. Furthermore, the physiognomy of the country and the people makes it clear to the traveler that people in the Basque provinces have a more natural education and their nobler breed enjoy greater popularity than in neighboring Spain and France.*
>
> *(von Humboldt, 2013, p. 10)*

Humboldt observed a great intimacy between different social groups in the Basque Country and that with regard to what we would today term ritual or cultural performance (cf. Mattig, 2019, pp. 239–243). There was no difference between the social estates when it came to dancing, games or political debates; everyone joined in cheerfully. Even nobles and educated people took part in common customs and enjoyed them together with the common people. Humboldt, who took note of this with astonishment, concluded that this had positive effects in several respects. In the first place, it resulted in a general sense of togetherness: The Basque nation formed a 'whole'. Furthermore, the educated persons could develop their bodily and emotional powers by participating in common customs. Finally, through this sense of belonging together, the educated persons were eager to teach the commoners about the insights of the Enlightenment. Among the Basques, Humboldt found no 'intellectual aristocracy'. In this sense, Humboldt saw the Basques as a great model of *Bildung*.

However, many of his contemporaries did not share his view since they regarded the Basques simply as raw and uncultivated (Hurch, 2010, p. 10). At that time, the Basques had not even developed literature in their own language.

In conclusion, Humboldt's criticism of the new intellectual aristocracy and the resulting social divide contradict the widespread interpretation of him as an elitist thinker. That he himself was portrayed as an 'intellectual aristocrat' (Roth, 1971, p. 293), however, holds a certain irony. Likewise, a perusal of Humboldt's ethnographic work exposes the postcolonial interpretation of his theory of *Bildung*, which holds that Humboldt looked down on 'raw' peoples from a standpoint of European superiority (Spieker & Wischmann, 2022). This argument is hard to maintain. 'No kind of feudal constitution has crept into this happy corner of Europe' (von Humboldt, 2013, p. 98), says Humboldt about the Basque Country. This implies that all other, supposedly civilised countries in Europe, are 'unhappy'. More than that, in a first draft of *The Basques*, Humboldt explicitly accused those people 'who look down with disdain on everything they call raw and uncultivated' for a lack of 'higher humanity' (GS XIII, p. 11; see also Mattig, 2019, pp. 289–293). It does not take much imagination to realise that Humboldt is critically addressing the 'intellectual aristocrats' here.

Sachs (2003) has addressed the postcolonial criticism of Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859)—Wilhelm's younger brother—and criticised it for

being too undifferentiated: The fact that a writer was a male, white and bourgeois European does not necessarily mean that his writings expressed colonial attitudes. What Sachs writes about Alexander can also be applied to Wilhelm:

> *In the end, Humboldt stands out as an important exception to the European colonial paradigm. He was no doubt a man of his time, but he also achieved enough distance from his society, both literally and figuratively, to transcend many of its prejudices. Indeed, the post-colonial critics themselves are deeply indebted to Humboldt's critique of Western hypocrisy.*
>
> (Sachs, 2003, p. 118)

Historically, the idea of *Bildung* has to be seen in the context of a rejection of the political and cultural hegemony of France at that time, as indeed in the rejection of Roman imperialism in contrast to Greek federalism during antiquity (Mattig, 2019, pp. 78–90). In line with the positions of Løvlie (2002) and Koller (2018) cited earlier, I argue that Wilhelm von Humboldt had a cosmopolitan vision of the unfolding of all humanity in its diversity, which derived from his disapproval of any imperial hegemony (Mattig, 2019, pp. 91–132). Thus, he too can be regarded as a kind of precursor of postcolonial thought. Considering that Humboldt's ethnographic reflections were based on his concept of *Bildung*, this very concept seems to be an intellectual tool *against* elitist and colonial attitudes, rather than one committed to them.

Education

Although Humboldt visited some schools during his ethnographic research in the Basque Country, his fieldwork was not particularly directed at schooling. Instead, in his ethnographies, he was concerned with the *Bildung* of national characters in a comprehensive sense, and he viewed schools in terms of their function of either maintaining or changing national characters (cf. Mattig, 2019, pp. 271–276). In this regard, he made a remarkable observation in the Basque Country: Although pupils were forced to learn Spanish in schools and the Basque language was forbidden under penalty, the Basque national character seemed strong enough to resist this violence due to traditional forms of socialisation (Mattig, 2019, p. 275). Freely borrowing a word from Bernstein (Bernstein, 1970), one can say that Humboldt learned from this that society can indeed compensate for school. However, if society is weak, then schooling is an appropriate means for strengthening the national character.

The end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century was not only a time of lively ethnographic and anthropological research, it was also an era of intense discussion on pedagogical issues (e.g., Fuchs, 2019, pp. 63–143). In German-speaking lands, pedagogues such as Basedow (1724–1790), Salzmann (1744–1811) and Campe (1746–1818)—with Campe being one of the private teachers of the young brothers Alexander and Wilhelm von Humboldt—proposed an educational reform agenda today referred to as philanthropism

(cf. Fuchs, 2019, pp. 98–108). This movement aimed to have a child-appropriate education and to form a new society. However, it was also rejected. In 1808, Niethammer (1766–1848), a Bavarian school reformer, published a book entitled *The Controversy of Philanthropinism and Humanism in the Theory of Educational Instruction of Our Time*, in which he criticised philanthropinism for being too utilitarian and overly oriented towards industry (Tenorth, 2020, pp. 203–208). As a counterpoint, he pleaded for 'free human *Bildung*' (Niethammer, 1808, p. 339) and '*Bildung* of humanity' (Niethammer, 1808, p. 339). For him, this meant particularly '*Bildung* of the spirit' (Niethammer, 1808, p. 337).

Niethammer thus summed up one of the most important pedagogical controversies of the time. He was even the first to coin the term 'humanism'. However, by 'humanism', he was referring to the old Latin schools, which he rejected just as much as philanthropinism. Thus, the new humanistic ideas of Niethammer, Humboldt and others have been called 'neo-humanism' (Blankertz, 2015, pp. 97–98). Today, however, Humboldt is known as the main representative of neo-humanism and neo-humanistic education (e.g., Fuchs, 2019, pp. 121–131). Humboldt's educational thinking differs from Niethammer's in important ways, which is related to his insights from ethnographic research, as is shown in this chapter.

In 1806, Prussia suffered a devastating defeat by Napoleon's troops. As a result, an encompassing reform was started, today referred to as the Prussian Reform Movement (e.g., Gall, 2011, pp. 138–225). In 1809, Humboldt was assigned by the Prussian king to lead the reforms of the education system.

One of the main characteristics of schools at that time was their link to feudal society since social estates were separated into different kinds of schooling, preparing the young generation according to their inherited social positions. Humboldt set out to change this fundamentally and elaborated plans for a comprehensive school system that has often been described in research literature (e.g., Benner, 2023, pp. 139–177). He proposed an essential division of education into two parts, general education (*allgemeine Bildung*) and vocational education (*specielle Bildung*). Every student should first receive a general education and only then progress to vocational education. General education would ensure that each student acquires the capabilities to choose whatever vocational education they prefer and to also be able to change their vocation later in life if they wanted. Humboldt further divided general education into three successive stages, elementary education, school education and university education.

The idea of general education was related to Humboldt's concept of human powers: Every power of each student was to be developed. This included 'practicing memory, sharpening the mind, correcting judgment and refining moral feeling' (GS X, p. 205). The sensual and physical powers were also to be exercised, as Humboldt wrote in his school plans: General education was to be directed 'at the human being in general', namely, 'as gymnastic, aesthetic, didactic (and in this latter respect again as mathematical, philosophical . . . and historical) at the main functions of its being' (GS XIII, p. 277). However, general education was more than the development of the individual.

Seemingly contradictory, general education should also ensure that all students develop a sense of togetherness. Humboldt explicitly opposed elite education, rejecting one-sided scholarship or intellectual refinement and instead focused on 'the improvement of character and of attitudes'. In no instance did he want to address 'particular parts of the nation, but rather its entire, undivided mass' (GS X, p. 201).[2]

The main difference between Humboldt and Niethammer can be found here (Tenorth, 2009). For Niethammer, only a small elite was able to develop his ideal of intellectual culture, which for him was the guarantor of humanity. In contrast, Humboldt was sceptical of the intellectual elite. The nation could not be formed well by initiating only a few individuals into the intellectual sanctuaries of humanity. In his ethnographies, he had noticed how damaging an 'intellectual aristocracy' was for the nation as a whole. The intellectual class was even in danger of becoming overly cerebral. Interestingly, as a Prussian reformer, Humboldt argued in a manner similar to that in his Basque ethnography. For example, in a motion to appoint the preacher Natorp (1774–1846), Humboldt justified Natorp's suitability by saying that he had rendered outstanding services to the 'education of the people' (*Volksbildung*):

> *The education of the people is the basis of all education in the first place. [F]rom it alone springs genuine love of one's country, and it continues to have an effect even in higher education, which immediately begins to degenerate into sophistry and dalliance, and loses all but the content of its own language when the people cease to possess a firm, straight character elevated by natural but true feeling. . . . In the Prussian states, the foundation for a beneficial improvement can also be laid in this.*
>
> (GS 13, p. 300)

The warning against 'sophistry and dalliance' again refers to the 'intellectual aristocracy'. Humboldt was also responsible for affairs of the church. In this function, he pleaded for church music because, as he stated, it speaks 'directly to the feeling' and establishes 'a natural bond between the lower and higher classes of the nation' (GS 10, p. 74). Importantly, Humboldt did not make such considerations about the 'education of the people' and a 'natural bond' between the social classes in his writings before he went to Spain and the Basque Country. I argue, therefore, that while Humboldt's ethnographic fieldwork was not primarily concerned with education, certain orientations in his educational reform plans can nevertheless be traced to his ethnographic findings, especially his scepticism of the intellectual elite.

Conclusion: What's New?

I conclude with a comment on the concept of *Bildung*. Recently, attempts have been made to formulate a 'new' approach to *Bildung* and education based on an ethnographic perspective (e.g., Wulf et al., 2004). Here, *Bildung* is intended to refer not only to cognitive knowledge and reflection but also to

bodily knowledge, social practice, etc. In this notion of the seemingly 'old' concept of *Bildung*, there is still a trace of Spranger's interpretation of Humboldt, according to which *Bildung* refers solely to the inner powers of the human being. However, my perusal of Humboldt's work shows that an ethnographic concept of *Bildung* was in fact Humboldt's original idea, and hence, it turns out to be quite 'old'. Humboldt rejected not only 'intellectual aristocracy' but also what might be called an 'aristocracy of the intellect'. Thus, in Humboldt's work, ethnography and education are systematically linked through their common basis in the concept of *Bildung*.

Notes

1 Wilhelm von Humboldt's 17 volumes of the *Gesammelte Schriften* (1903–1936) are referred to by indicating the volume number. All translations from German sources are by the chapter author.
2 This might seem nationalistic. However, Humboldt's thoughts are embedded in a strong sense of cosmopolitanism, which cannot be addressed here.

References

Albrecht, S., & Hill, C. (2023). Wilhelm von Humboldt: A continuing legacy of self-cultivation in education. In B. Geier (Ed.), *The Palgrave handbook of educational thinkers*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-81037-5_70-1

Benner, D. (1990). *Wilhelm von Humboldts Bildungstheorie. Eine problemgeschichtliche Studie zum Begründungszusammenhang neuzeitlicher Bildungsreform*. Juventa.

Benner, D. (2023). *Wilhelm von Humboldts Bildungstheorie* (4th ed.). Juventa.

Bernstein, B. (1970). Education cannot compensate for society. *New Society*, *26*, 344–351.

Blankertz, H. (2015). *Die Geschichte der Pädagogik. Von der Aufklärung bis zur Gegenwart* (11th ed.). Büchse der Pandora.

Bratranek, F. T. (1876). *Goethe's Briefwechsel mit den Gebrüdern von Humboldt*. Brockhaus.

Bunzl, M. (1996). Franz Boas and the Humboldtian tradition: From Volksgeist and Nationalcharakter to an anthropological concept of culture. In G. Stocking (Ed.), *Volksgeist as method and ethic. Essays on Boasian ethnography and the German anthropological tradition* (pp. 17–78). The University of Wisconsin Press.

Fuchs, B. (2019). *Geschichte des pädagogischen Denkens*. Barbara Budrich.

Gall, L. (2011). *Wilhelm von Humboldt. Ein Preuße von Welt*. Propyläen.

Harbsmeier, M. (1992). Die Rückwirkungen des europäischen Ausgreifens nach Übersee auf den deutschen anthropologischen Diskurs um 1800. In R. Vierhaus (Ed.), *Frühe Neuzeit—Frühe Moderne?* (pp. 422–442). Vandenoeck & Ruprecht.

Hurch, B. (2010). Das Baskische—Die baskische Abteilung. In B. Hurch (Ed.), *Wilhelm von Humboldt. Schriften zur anthropologie der Basken* (pp. 1–37). Ferdinand Schöningh.

Koller, H.-C. (2018). *Bildung anders denken* (2nd ed.). Kohlhammer.

Løvlie, L. (2002). The promise of Bildung. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, *36*(3), 476–486.

Mattig, R. (2019). *Wilhelm von Humboldt als Ethnograph*. Beltz Juventa.

Mattig, R. (2020). Ethnography and liberty: A new look at the anthropological work of Wilhelm von Humboldt. *History and Anthropology*, *31*(4), 491–509. https://doi.org/10.1080/02757206.2020.1799789

Niethammer, F. I. (1808). *Der Streit des Philantropinismus und Humanismus in der Theorie des Erziehungs-Unterrichts unsrer Zeit*. Friedrich Frommann.

Niezen, R. (2009). The Aufklärung's human discipline. Comparative anthropology according to Kant, Herder and Wilhelm von Humboldt. *Intellectual History Review*, *19*(2), 177–195. https://doi.org/10.1080/17496970902722890
Roth, H. (1971). *Pädagogische anthropologie* (3rd ed.). Schroedel Verlag.
Sachs, A. (2003) The ultimate 'other': Post-colonialism and Alexander von Humboldt's ecological relationship with nature. *History and Theory*, *42*, 111–135.
Spieker, S., & Wischmann, A. (2022). Depicting colonial contexts in worlds of Bildung. *History of Education Researcher*, *109*, 12–26.
Spranger, E. (1909). *Wilhelm von Humboldt und die Humanitätsidee*. Reuther & Reichard.
Tenorth, H.-E. (2009). Allgemeines Normativ von 1808. Niethammer als Schulreformer. In G. Wenz (Ed.), *Friedrich Immanuel Niethammer (1766–1848). Beiträge zu Biographie und Werkgeschichte* (pp. 65–81). Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.
Tenorth, H.-E. (2020). *Die Rede von Bildung*. J.B. Metzler.
Ugwu, C. (2017). History of ethnography: Straitening the records. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, *9*(7), 64–68. https://doi.org/10.5897/IJSA2016.0670
von Humboldt, W. (1854). *The sphere and duties of government*. John Chapman.
von Humboldt, W. (1903–1936). *Wilhelm von Humboldts Gesammelte Schriften*. B. Behr.
von Humboldt, W. (2013). The Basques or observations on a journey through Biscay and the French Basque country in the spring of 1801. In *Wilhelm von Humboldt: Selected Basque writings. The Basques and announcement of a publication* (pp. 1–163). University of Nevada.
Wulf, C., Althans, B., Audehm, K., Bausch, C., Jörissen, B., Göhlich, M., Mattig, R., Tervooren, A., Wagner-Willi, M., & Zirfas, J. (2004). *Bildung im ritual. Schule, Familie, Jugend, Medien*. VS Verlag.
Zabaleta-Gorrotxategi, I. (2013). Introduction: Wilhelm von Humboldt and the Basques. In *Wilhelm von Humboldt: Selected Basque writings* (pp. IX–XLIII). University of Nevada.

7 Is Necessity the Mother of Invention? Improvisational Action, Creativity and Art in Times of Crisis (or Crisis of Time)

Margit Schild

Introduction

The professional fields of disaster control and crisis preparation draw upon improvisation, creativity and art in order to manage unforeseeable events. Situations where practices play out differently than expected demand creativity, particularly in the initial phase, when there is no clear routine, solution or instruction to follow (Thiemann & Hofinger, 2016). Improvisation in these contexts is 'a high expression of an emergency manager's art' (Kendra & Wachtendorf, 2007, p. 326). Given the high degree of difficulty and complexity of the tasks to be accomplished in a crisis, this work is often referred to as the art of task force (Strohschneider, 2022, p. 21). Battlefield surgeons, for instance, who manage to make the right decisions within seconds in frontline action with the noise of gunfire and helicopters, elevate pure survival to an art with their activities (Mascolo, 2023, p. 3). In a world that has entered a highly fragile state crises are the new normal (Voss, 2022, p. 5). This ongoing period, which Hartmut Rosa interprets as a crisis of time (Rosa, 2020a, p. 39), no longer represents singular events traditionally referred to as accidents, disasters and pandemics but encompasses almost all areas of life.

Considering the terms improvisation, creativity and art, I question the extent to which they can be useful in general preparation for future crisis-like events or in coping with daily crisis times (or time crises). This may have relevance beyond these disciplines to anyone active in ethnography, educational science, pedagogy or training, who is tasked with preparing people professionally for life. Furthermore, these fields are addressed by asking how and to what extent creativity and improvisation are reflected upon therein and, more importantly, whether these topics are given enough consideration as coping strategies for time crises. This has the potential to open new perspectives, as it demands more attention to be accorded to relations and less to singular events.

The jumping-off point for this chapter is the failed Apollo 13 lunar mission of 1970 retold in some detail in Ron Howard's 1995 Hollywood movie 'Apollo 13'. This contribution examines this famous accident through selected film scenes so as to analyse the following: What are the basic conditions for

DOI: 10.4324/9781032629384-9

This chapter has been made available under a (CC-BY-NC-ND) 4.0 license.

an improvisation, how does it work and what can it achieve? How do we understand creativity in a crisis context and what does it attain to see it as art? Answering these questions can also help determine whether necessity is in fact the mother of invention. If crisis is the new normal, it becomes critical to know whether this is true and how it could be applied beneficially.

The Crisis of Time

On 11 April 1970—after the explosion of an oxygen tank—the Apollo 13 mission had to abandon its landing on the moon. The damaged systems required the rescue of the crew, consisting of Jim Lovell, Jack Swigert and Fred Haise (Uri, 2020). In the Apollo 13 movie, NASA flight director Gene Kranz (played by Ed Harris) introduces his Houston team members to this new situation: 'I want you to forget the flight plan. From this moment on we are improvising a new mission' (Howard, 1995, 1:04:45). Among several other technical improvisations, a makeshift air filter played a significant role in saving the lives of the three crew members (Uri, 2020) (see Figures 7.3–7.7). After 88 hours, Apollo 13 landed in the South Pacific with the crew safe and sound (Mars, 2020); since then, this mission has been considered a 'successful failure' (NASA, n.d.). This 'newly created mission' and the framework conditions triggering and accompanying improvisation are examined more closely hereunder, and especially the process details related to the accident in space.

Houston, We've Had a Problem Here

The focus of the improvised new mission was on the repair of systems that had previously been working smoothly in the background. Due to a chain reaction of events, problems had to be solved that had not existed before, such as the availability of sufficient breathing air. In addition, since it was obviously impossible to get any spare parts to the spacecraft, Houston was faced with the challenge of resolving these issues solely with its arsenal of onboard resources.

A second aspect related to this is a phenomenon described here as a 'time crisis'. A moon mission depends not only on technical systems but also on precise time management where everything runs synchronously; however, the explosion destroyed its temporal structure (Uri, 2020). Disaster research mentions time crises in connection with catastrophic events. Through these crises, social processes can be extremely accelerated or decelerated, for example, when the events seem to become overwhelming during the clearing up, as well as within the crisis team—time becomes scarce as a resource, while minutes stretch into hours for those waiting for help (Voss et al., 2022, p. 3). In Apollo 13, this parallel of differing time dynamics is depicted through cinematic means. In Houston, the staff, harried and overtired, are working under great pressure on solutions and racing between offices, while up in space, a cassette player floats about in the weightlessness, the song playing slowly on it indicating the end of its battery life. The crew, freezing and fighting fatigue, are trying to kill time (Howard, 1995, 1:24:40, 1:22:30; 1:31:20).

Similar time dynamics were also reported in the context of the coronavirus crisis that, on the one hand, brought the world to a standstill (Mascolo, 2020, p. 1) and, on the other hand, demanded quick action: To slow the spread, action must be swift (Mascolo, 2020, p. 1). In this regard, Rosa (2020b) considers the sharp decoupling between the physically real traffic slowing down and the accelerating digital transmission, communication and production as one of the most structurally significant side-effects of the current crisis (Rosa, 2020b, p. 195).

Persistent Crisis Time and Time Crises

It is useful to consider, commencing with the isolated incident on Apollo 13 through to Rosa's assertion (2020a), that all the major crises currently being experienced are crises of time. According to Rosa, the potentiating dynamisation of social relations (2020a, p. 2) constitutes the central moment of modernisation processes. A modern society is characterised by the fact that it is only able to stabilise itself dynamically, which means that it is structurally dependent on growth, acceleration and innovation compression in order to maintain and reproduce itself (Academy of Sciences and Humanities in Hamburg, 2015, 15:18). Societal processes, which operate at multiple levels and are complexly interwoven, involve the incessant acceleration of transportation, communication and production (Rosa, 2020a, p. 268). These processes are being set in motion at an ever-faster pace (Academy of Sciences and Humanities in Hamburg, 2015). Every individual feels the consequences directly in almost all areas of life and, generally, in the acceleration of the pace of life (Rosa, 2020a, p. 138). Time crises have become the permanent state underlying major and minor systems of our society, as well as our day-to-day life; they provide the supportive professions, counsellors, coaches and therapists with a never-ending supply of permanently stressed, always behind members of society carrying around never-ending to-do lists. One serious consequence of constantly changing and accelerating conditions is that processes requiring time lag behind. Not everything can be accelerated at the same pace, for example, the flu, pregnancy, mourning or emotional processes in general.

Rosa (2020a, p. 46) uses the term 'desynchronisation' to capture the conflict between slow systems and unilateral acceleration. The so-called eco-crisis can be described as a desynchronisation (Academy of Sciences and Humanities in Hamburg, 2015, 1:01:20), where nature's own time conflicts with society's time. More precisely, he states that environmental degradation is a consequence of nature's overtaxed regeneration times (Academy of Sciences and Humanities in Hamburg, 2015, 57:25). Another example is the crisis of democracy (Academy of Sciences and Humanities in Hamburg, 2015, 58:50) as a political system coming under accelerated pressure to deliver binding decisions quickly (Rosa, 2020a, p. 407). This is, among others, a direct consequence of the higher pace of economic cycles, as well as scientific and technological innovation (Rosa, 2020a, p. 407). Related to this is a time crisis between jurisprudence and the economy, as traditional methods have become too slow, for

example, in conflict resolution in economic relations (Rosa, 2020a, p. 406). All this can be reduced to the notion of *the time of democracy versus the time of the economy* (Academy of Sciences and Humanities in Hamburg, 2015, 58:50). As in many other areas, politics is conducted situationally. It shifts to a mode of muddling through—with a focus on the most urgent event—by creating provisional solutions (BAS, 2017b; Rosa, 2020a, pp. 391, 408).

In light of these ideas and what happenend at Apollo 13, the need to take a closer look at the connection between time crises and improvisational action becomes clear and urgent. The study of improvisation in conjunction with creativity and art—as skills that can positively influence goals, content and quality of strategies made in response to time crises—is valuable.

Improvisation—An Overview Together With Accidents and the Arts

In this chapter, the theme of improvisation is examined with the help of an accident in space and the dominant role of time constraints. Looking at this event together with other tense crisis situations provides an initial understanding of improvised actions, their potential and their limitations.

In general, this subject is broad and complex. Improvisation can be discussed as an activity deeply rooted in human action and occurring in almost all contexts, ranging from arrangements in the home, to emergency solutions, through to the high artistic forms of music and the performing arts; from salad dressing to dance; and from spontaneous speech to multinational political decisions (BAS, 2017a). It transcends milieus, occurs in all cultures and establishes commonalities and analogies between unrelated disciplines; improvisation is a 'new, exciting and radically interdisciplinary field', as Lewis and Piekut term it (2013, p. 20).

Furthermore, a comprehensive definition is difficult to find. By way of an example, the experimental guitarist Derek Bailey, author of 'Improvisation: Its Nature and Practice in Music', 'simply avoids creating a definition at all, preferring to describe cases in which improvisation—as Bailey understands it—works' (2013, p. 3). Unforeseen events, such as accidents, crises and catastrophes, constitute those cases in which improvisation works or is used as a direct response to time crises.

Accidents and Extreme Time Crises—Being Forced to Improvise

The clearest example of a direct connection between time pressure and improvised actions can be seen in professions such as emergency doctors, firefighters, disaster relief workers and astronauts. Their training focuses on the unpredictable, high-pressure, time-sensitive nature of their work. Whenever extreme time pressure faces a stressful and dangerous exceptional situation, things are done reflexively. For example, in battlefield surgery, what is being trained here now above all is how to act quickly and safely under stress and with limited resources, not highly specialised surgery, which comes later when

the wounded arrive in hospitals (Mascolo, 2023, p. 3). (Special) routines that can be accessed within seconds must be advanced (Voss et al., 2022, p. 3). However, something that also happens in both professional and nonprofessional contexts consists of reverting back into familiar structures and what is regarded as a safe space for action (Heck & Becker, 2022, p. 9). The organisational researcher Karl E. Weick described some such cases:

> In 1949, 13 firefighters lost their lives at Mann Gulch, and in 1994, 14 more firefighters lost their lives under similar conditions at South Canyon. In both cases, these 23 men and four women were overrun by exploding fires when their retreat was slowed because they failed to drop the heavy tools they were carrying. By keeping their tools, they lost valuable distance they could have covered more quickly if they had been lighter. All 27 perished within sight of safe areas.
>
> (Weick, 1996, p. 301)

Why they kept their tools in a life-threatening situation that hindered their escape constitutes a good example of the aforementioned 'safe space for action'. Weick continues,

> People who have learned during training to carry out whatever equipment they carry into a fire and who hear over and over how much equipment costs. . . . From what we know about the effects of stress on overlearned behavior (Weick, 1990), the safest prediction would be that firefighters under pressure would regress to what they know best, which in this case would be keeping their tools.
>
> (Weick, 1996, p. 306)

People revert to pretrained behaviour in unpredictable situations where they are stressed for time, even if it makes no sense at that moment. Likewise, self-evident cultural obligations or habitual cultural ties can prevent behaviour that would obviously save the day (Neitzel & Welzer, 2011, p. 25). 'How is it that people prefer to be burned to death in a house, instead of running out into the street without their trousers on?' (Welzer, 2017, p. 1). These not infrequent acts illustrate the extent to which cultural habits exert an almost compelling (Neitzel & Welzer, 2011, p. 25) pull, ensuring that the level of reflection is not reached. And in an unprecedented event, it rarely helps orient oneself to the behaviour of others—a practice called the bystander phenomenon—because those other people know no better:

> When several people witness an accident or a fight, rarely does anyone help. None of the bystanders knows for sure what the right reaction should be, so they all try to orient themselves to each other—and since no one seems to react, everyone simply stops and looks.
>
> (Neitzel & Welzer, 2011, p. 21)

Even though we are talking about acting in extreme situations here, this knee-jerk behaviour makes it clear that in certain moments, time is so scarce that decisions become limited to familiar structures (Heck & Becker, 2022, p. 9). These consist of pretrained behaviour, routines or other aspects like cultural ties, or even what is available within one's immediate range (Geenen, 2003, p. 15). In the end, the only choice that exists is to escape to the roof of a house. Options become reduced—normatively speaking—to right or wrong.

Reacting by quickly accessing routines can either prove successful or be an obstacle to a positive result, while in volatile high-stress contexts, this can guarantee none. Crisis preparation achieves exactly this, and yet a residue remains when practice and, more importantly, improvisation reaches their limits and creativity is called for. This is especially important in first-time situations for which no script and no anticipated action model is available.

Art and Time Crises, or the Voluntariness of Improvising

Quick access to learned practice or behaviour is also key in the arts, but while in crises, the scarcity of time is imposed on the participants, artists create such frameworks voluntarily. The multimedia artist Elvira Hufschmid demonstrated this when she attempted to capture on camera and project on a screen for the audience to see the creation of pencil drawings on a sketchpad (BAS, 2017a). The subject of her artistic work consisted of scenes from a Hollywood movie that she tried to capture in sketches. The amount of time she had was predetermined by the rapid changing of the moving images. Accordingly, the drawings had a fleeting character, filled with hints and/or overlapping motifs.

However, improvisational theatre—as well as improvised music or drawing—cannot exist without preestablished external parameters such as the predetermined length of the event, regulated harmonic sequences and the choice of material (Landgraf, 2003, p. 6). Improvisation, which occurs on a stage in front of a participating audience, generates moments in which art and artistic processes are viewed and questioned within the prescribed time constraints and preselected framework conditions. Landgraf (2003, p. 6) describes the simultaneous conception and presentation of art as the self-presentation of the artistic production process. Goehr, who elaborated not only differences but also similarities between improvisation in crises and art, calls this form 'improvisation extempore' (Goehr, 2013, p. 459). 'Improvisation impromptu', on the other hand, 'refers to what we do in any sort of activity or performance of life when we're suddenly confronted with an obstacle which, to win, continue, or survive, we must overcome' (Goehr, 2013, p. 462).

This diagram (see Figure 7.1) shows the emergency to the left, which forces us to improvise, and to the right, improvisation in the arts. It defines the decreasing degree of distress or compulsion. Drawing these two concepts apart (Goehr, 2013, p. 459) provides the full picture by locating the improvised action in an overall temporal structure and thus in differing initial

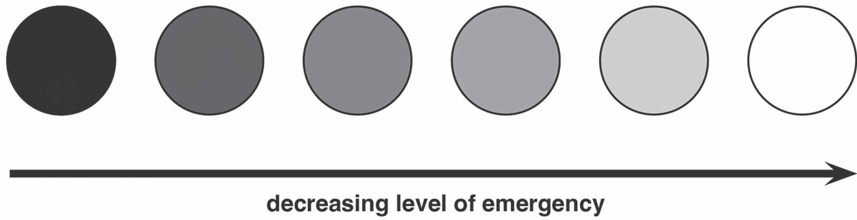

Figure 7.1 Two concepts of improvisation, drawn apart.
Source: Diagram by the author

conditions that include the idea of losing control or regaining it, because 'a loss of control, the surrendering of agency is a necessary condition for the possibility of improvisation' (Landgraf, 2018, p. 212). However, a disaster is about regaining the ability to control a situation, which is itself experienced as a maximum loss of control (Schnabel, 2020). Loss of control and regaining it, otherwise referred to as the 'impromptu/extempore dynamic in improvisation' (Lewis & Piekut, 2013, p. 27), occurs along a timeline in the context of higher-level developments. Actors follow circumstances or precede them, act under pressure or are ahead of the situation (Bédé, 2016, p. 90). They have to 'pull chestnuts out of the fire' or 'take the bull by the horns'. By way of example, we can take John Dunbar's ride between the fronts in the 'Dances with Wolves' movie: an improvised action interpreted, on the one hand, as a suicide mission and, on the other hand, as a self-sacrificing heroic act. It ushers in victory for his own army, changing the course of the war (Costner, 1990, 07:00). In this moment, improvisation is also initiated. Actors open up the game by themselves creating an unpredictable event, thus forcing a move that reverses the conditions.

With these considerations in mind, the diagram above can also be read as a process in time. An initiative started on the left leads via time to the right, where actors regain more options and thus define framework conditions or parameters. In actual events like politics, economics, or management, the 'actors' are embedded within the respective situations in a superordinate temporal structure, which determines whether actions are 'active' or 'reactive'. In relation to the system of politics, for example, Rosa states that politics react to the urgency of the temporary. Thus, provisional solutions would take the place of grand designs (Rosa, 2020a, p. 401).

Above and beyond that, it is the context of superordinate developments that provides direction, or even meaning, to all improvisational actions. Directions are set by political goals, such as strengthening democracy or preserving natural resources for future generations. When this is missing, there is the danger of an uncontrolled and uncontrollable 'drifting' within a sea of options and contingencies (Rosa, 2020a, p. 380). Any lack of a temporal long-term perspective is what Bjonerud calls 'dangerous temporal illiteracy in our society' (Bjonerud, 2018, p. 6). She states, 'We are navigating recklessly toward our future using conceptions of time as primitive as a world map from the 14th century, when dragons lurked around the edges of a flat earth' (Bjonerud, 2018, p. 7). The answer is certainly not having increased and exclusive improvising only but recovering all those contents that open up long-term perspectives. Bjonerud terms this concept 'timefulness' (2018). But, to provide the full picture, even without the orientation to higher-level goals, improvisations born of necessity—also without pretrained skills—function by providing decisive impulses and perhaps by unintentionally delivering new results.

Is Necessity the Mother of Invention? Part One

The makeshift air filter fulfilled its desired function. And in the context of a NASA moon mission, it was certainly the first tennis sock used to filter CO_2. This was a creative achievement that required the expertise of the NASA engineers involved. However, this invention did not lead to future NASA spaceship air filters being made of socks and cardboard. Thus, rather than being classified as a useful invention outside of this isolated context, its status was exclusively that of a desperately needed one-off spare part. A 'real' solution already existed, an air filter, which was unattainable at that moment. The invention was merely a functioning spare part, made with materials that were uniquely present at that moment. Through this direct reference to the equipping of a found situation, with its composition, it represented the material nature of this moment in time and in this place.

During the coronavirus crisis, similar phenomena were observed: Here, too, people were forced to improvise (Bujard et al., 2020) and had to resort to the arsenal of resources available onboard, so to speak. Depending on the income and social status of the families affected, school closures and lockdowns could be dealt with in different ways. For families with a house in the countryside, a garden, grandparents and good technology, these became components of this arsenal. Those who believed themselves to be permanently in safe circumstances could afford to interpret the shutdown as a favourable opportunity to decelerate and abandon growth pressures (Dörre, 2020). Others were brought to the brink of despair by the COVID-19 pandemic. They had to cope with great existential fears because of part-time work circumstances and the threat of unemployment.

As seen with Apollo13 and COVID-19, time crises and asynchronous time systems seem to simultaneously generate and, at the same time, 'burn up' creativity; it is needed to maintain or regain basic functions. What matters is where and under which circumstances the improvisational action occurs, its context or how the arsenal of onboard resources is equipped.

Three aspects become clear from these considerations. First, it should be noted that improvisation always questions the framework conditions, which are temporal, structural, political and spatial. Thus, it should also be considered as a tool of research and analysis. It provides information about the scope of action of different social groups and their living conditions. Second, the radically interdisciplinary concept of improvisation acquires a different position depending on the overall time-related situation and the framework conditions of its occurrence and thus has a different scope of action within each respective time crisis. In light of this idea, it is hereby suggested that the moment of improvisation—similar to navigating a ship—be called a position in the crisis of time. This position permits it to be questioned in terms of its parameters. Because they are not automatically there, like the coordinates of a house, in the moment of a time crisis, they first must be determined and named. Third, as demonstrated by the arts, the short timeframe involved is not just a physical aspect, filled with a few seconds for one mechanical movement of the hand only, but also a space for creativity and an aesthetic surplus that entails different directions as to where the hand could possibly go. This might initiate the unexpected, such as a new option that no one had considered before. John Dunbar's daring, crazy action, jumping between the frontlines, created this moment of surplus, one that at the same time caused surprise and hesitation because no one else could quickly interpret what was happening. A temporal leeway emerged here in otherwise deadlocked events, which others took advantage of, that subsequently changed the story. Against this backdrop and as described earlier, establishing and expanding routines and behaviour for quick, improvised action is thus just one side of the coin. The other side is represented by the position of the arts, that is, on the one hand, a potential space of experiments, options and ideas. On the other hand, considering the radical interdisciplinarity of improvised actions, it is also an important partner in every field of education that teaches creativity and coping strategies for dealing with time crises.

But if there are—abstractly speaking—always a few options involved, in each moment and for each length of action, there still remains an open question: If improvisation requires, on the one hand, routine, practice and preparation and, on the other hand, a connection to creativity, what exactly is meant by radical interdisciplinarity and which aspects are to be taught and have to be developed to the point of being routinely and creatively responsive to something when no one knows what that something will be?

Improvisation and Creativity

Provisional Solutions

Provisional solutions are temporary and makeshift constructions. When the concept of time crisis is also applied to provisional solutions in the household or in everyday life—triggered by minor crises or accidents—the same principle becomes apparent: If a person who wears glasses breaks them on a Saturday evening, they also get into a time crisis. Their problem cannot be resolved immediately because the optician shops are closed. The fixed and different time system of their opening hours conflicts with the person's immediate needs. Since functioning glasses represents an important condition for everything else the person intends to do, the time must be bridged, at best by improvising a provisional solution. A paper clip can function as such, it builds a 'time bridge' and resynchronises—according to Rosa—an asynchronous or desynchronous time system (see Figure 7.2).

In Apollo 13, asynchronous time systems—those of man and machine—were caused by the CO_2 buildup in the lunar module. Because the filtration systems were not designed to purify the air for three people for an extended period of time, 'the deadly CO_2 gas is literally poisoning the astronauts with every breath in and out' (Howard, 1995, 1:24:33). There are more air filters in the command module, but 'They take square cartridges. The ones on the

Figure 7.2 A paper clip with its function as a time bridge.

Source: Photograph by the author

LEM are round' (see Figure 7.3). The flight director issues an order: 'I suggest you gentlemen invent a way to put a square peg in a round hole. Rapidly' (Howard, 1995, 1:16:47). The Houston team gathers all the items present in the simulator—and thus onboard—that are not needed in other contexts. They spread them out on a table, including boxes, all kinds of plastic parts and a space suit. It is this arsenal of onboard resources from which the solution to the problem must be worked out. 'We gotta find a way to make this fit into the hole for this'—says the lead engineer, holding up a square and a round object—before the engineer points to the items spread out on the table, 'using nothing but that' (Howard, 1995, 1:17:24) (see Figures 7.3–7.4).

Figure 7.3 'The people upstairs have handed us this one, and we gotta come through. We gotta find a way to make this fit into the hole for this . . . '.

Source: Drawing by the author

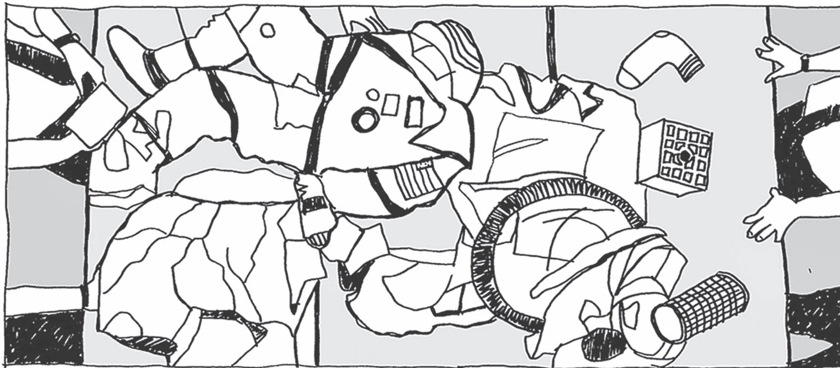

Figure 7.4 '. . . using nothing but that'.

Source: Drawing by the author

Figure 7.5 'We have an unusual procedure for you here'.

Source: Drawing by the author

Figure 7.6 'One sock'.

Source: Drawing by the author

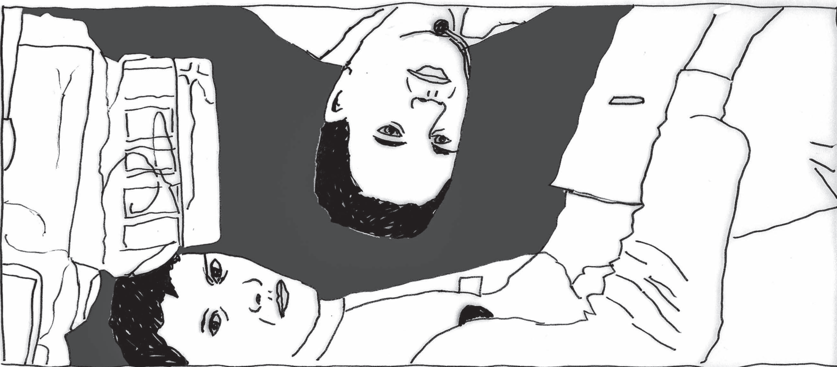

Figure 7.7 'Houston, the CO_2-level has dropped to nine and it is still falling'.

Source: Drawing by the author

'Using nothing but that' describes not only a key mechanism in the provisional; it is also connected to a fundamental process in our brain that enables us to replace filter material with a sock. A final scene from Apollo 13 provides a more detailed look at this process. Gene Kranz and his team discuss how the rescue operation can even begin to work and which systems are still undamaged and can be utilised. Since the condition of the main engines resulting from the explosion makes a direct turnaround with the spacecraft, the Odyssey, too risky, they are considering using the lunar module (LEM) for the flight home. However, the designers of the ferry are unsure: 'We can't make any guarantees. We designed the LEM to land on the moon, not fire the engine for course corrections' (Howard, 1995, 1:06:14). Gene Kranz replies, 'I don't care what anything is designed to do, I care about what it can do' (1:06:26).

Analogies and Similarity Relationships

The accident on Apollo 13 allows for the creation of a makeshift air filter and illuminates the connection between things or phenomena that do not simply exist in the so-called reality. The ability and need to recognise a resemblance between the texture of the filter material and the fabric of a sock represents thinking in analogies. This is fundamental to thinking: We are incessantly linking thoughts that have similarities. We produce them daily, hourly, even minute-by-minute and usually quite unconsciously. When confronted with something new and strange, we compare it with what we already know, using similarities to the familiar (Hofstadter & Sander, 2013, p. 960).

> Analogy-making, far from being merely an occasional mental sport, is the very lifeblood of cognition, permeating it at all levels, ranging all the way from mundane perceptions (that is a table) to subtle artistic insights and abstract scientific discoveries (such as general relativity). Between these extremes lie the mental acts that we carry out all the time every day—interpreting situations, judging the quality of various things, making decisions, learning new things—and all these acts are carried out by the same fundamental mechanism.
>
> (Hofstadter & Sander, 2013, p. 46)

Analogical thinking does not only rely on language or images because 'each sensory quality, as a unit of experience, can become the starting point of a linking thought process' (Hofstadter & Sander, 2013, p. 22). It is this underlying mechanism of thinking in analogies that enables the refunctioning or misappropriation of materials or techniques for a new use. The fabric of the tennis sock is similar enough to the texture of the filter material. The lunar module, which was supposed to take the crew to the moon, is used as a lifeboat (Uri, 2020). The moon's gravitational field functioned as an alternative propulsion; it gave the spacecraft a powerful thrust for its trajectory back to Earth (Uri, 2020). In order to get on course after the moon orbit, the landing engine

of the lunar module had to be ignited manually at the right moment; it was therefore 'misused' for course corrections (Howard, 1995, 1:38:44). These examples highlight the extent to which the principle of similarity encompasses possible solutions even for highly specialised systems.

Gene Kranz's demand to rethink the lunar module in terms of what it 'can do' initiates a process that first reduces the object to its basic form, to what it merely is at its core—namely, a vessel, a vehicle or a means of conveyance. 'It epitomises both the subtlety and the richness of adopting a more abstract viewpoint concerning an object one is looking at' (Hofstadter & Sander, 2013, p. 494). Viewed from this perspective, it provides many more connection points for analogies and the development of ideas. What is meant here by 'developing ideas' is initially nothing more than seeking to move the objects or systems under consideration for crew salvage purposes into other categories. A category is a 'mental structure to which all the different entities of the same type would be assigned' (Hofstadter & Sander, 2013, p. 37). The increasing CO_2 gas level causes the Houston technicians to think in terms of an air filter. With help from the concept of similarity, all available objects are then checked for their capacity to 'move' into this new category.

Apollo 13 illustrates how solutions are found without the actors intentionally and consciously choosing to work with analogies. As described earlier, it is precisely in the making of a provisional solution that this mechanism becomes activated. The desperate need to construct a makeshift item demands that the objects within the spaceship are checked for the extent to which they bear a resemblance to the 'real' device. The time crisis, asynchronicity, also 'creates' or forces thinking to occur in terms of similarities. In a rapidly rising flood, every roof on a house resembles a life raft.

All of these examples show that what we call improvisational ability and creativity are closely linked to recognising analogies across disparate situations or objects establishing similarity relations, as well as extending, shifting and switching between categories (Hofstadter & Sander, 2013, p. 298). Recognising similarities between two things that have nothing to do with each other is the moment of creative achievement. And the more extraordinary these similarities and the resulting combinations are, the more creative they become (Hofstadter & Sander, 2013, p. 395). This mechanism functions, of course, across disciplines, which explains its radical interdisciplinarity.

Necessity Is the Mother of Invention, Part Two

In the throes of an emergency, what is initially seen is a reduction of possibilities. Because there are no other options, socks must be used to filter air. While it sounds like a limitation, this is just one side of the coin. The concurrence of necessity, a time constraint and an arsenal of onboard resources opens up the thinking process in analogies to an expansion of the categories. A sock saves the lives of three astronauts in a flagship of high technology—a moon mission. This is—simply stated—actually the core mechanism in which necessity is the mother of invention and refers to the following:

Every situation contains a multitude of possibilities or alternative actions that, until needed, remain undetected. According to Brandstätter, fabricating similarities has no limitations. In principle, anything can be correlated with anything else (Brandstätter, 2008, p. 22). In addition, similarities leave room for a wealth of subjective and individual frames of reference, involve unconscious and emotional parts in thinking processes and open the space for thinking beyond conventionalised causal relations, beyond identifying thinking that puts things in unambiguous terms and relates them unambiguously to each other (Brandstätter, 2008, p. 23).

To put it another way, every situation offers an almost unlimited number of analogies that are all waiting for a good pairing with others to enter relationships of similarity, and one of which has the potential to change the outcome of the situation. As 'we swim nonstop in an ocean of small, medium-sized, and large analogies, ranging from mundane trivialities to brilliant insights' (Hofstadter & Sander, 2013, p. 44), it means that the analogy chosen from among them is appropriate. Thus, 'the quest for suitable analogues is a kind of art' according to Hofstadter and Sander (2013, p. 41). This art requires practice just like other visual or creative processes: the creation of analogies can be trained, and an army of similarities can be created for every situation, every circumstance, every thing. Describing something as "similar to" increases the scope for "understanding and interpretation" immensely and thus the starting points for new possibilities (Brandstätter, 2008, p. 23). This mechanism not only generates unconventional ideas, but also maintains the necessary openness to unpredictable developments. The establishment and expansion of similarity relationships between parameters of a situation that occur as an unforeseen event through an analogy, even if it comes from a very different context, constitutes a moment of creativity and the point of overlap between art and emergency management, between acting and firefighting, and between performance artists and battlefield surgeons.

Conclusion

Time crises are universal and have now become the new normal. Against this background and while facing accelerated social change, ethnography is capable of going beyond examining and describing the characteristics of time crises/ dyssynchronous developments and their effects on social processes, different social groups or milieus. Together with educational science, it is necessary to ask to what extent these developments influence established research methodologies, as these research processes and roles in the respective scientific systems can no longer be effected as usual. Education in general is considered to have—in the context of time crisis and the economy or technology—a slower pace of innovation, change and adaptation (Rosa, 2020a, p. 186). This might cause contradictions, conflicts and frictions with adjacent functional processes of other systems or institutions of society that—as a result—constantly 'burn up' the time and creativity of any respective systems. It is not only for this reason that both contexts should be of interest in researching, practicing and also

educating about coping strategies against acceleration, ones which may have nothing to do with a general ‘work faster or work more’ concept.

Coping strategies intended to counteract time crises and desynchronisation include improvisation, provisional solutions and creativity, and they have to be accorded special attention in research and education. Based on what has been learned here about improvisation, it transpires that practicing routines or a specific behaviour, together with analysing framework conditions and their position in an overall temporal structure, represents basic components. Goehr calls improvisation an “elasticity or spontaneity of mind and action” which “cannot in fact do without a certain habituation, training, or preprogramming of our practices” (2013, p. 462). However, here the key is through creativity, by educating, researching and practicing it as a time-related phenomenon. Time crises are spaces with different time patterns or temporal dynamics that are based on overarching (social, political, economic) developments. Moreover, it can also be practiced by designing or organising provisional solutions that represent—without even naming them as such—core strategies of creativity; thinking in analogies automatically occurs here. Furthermore, the provisional not only bridges dyssynchronous time systems, it is a cross-discipline, cross-cultural and cross-milieu phenomenon. It is therefore particularly suitable for teaching creativity at all levels of age, income and education.

Even if all this makes sense in the context of time crises, something remains that requires a strategy contrary to such diagnosed acceleration and which is more related to ‘timefulness’ (Bjonerud, 2018): Diverse, enigmatic and complex analogies—ready for a good pairing in the present moment when necessary—are based on variations of different situations someone has gone through, as well as a wealth of life experiences from the past. It seems that—against the backdrop of universal time crises and their implications on both a global and an individual level—an education system that not only teaches the content of the respective disciplines, or that is not just calibrated to the goal of knowledge acquisition for individual survival in professional competition, but also enables people to gain a wide variety of knowledge, skills and experiences—with the arts as an integral part of this—has become more relevant than ever. Finally, a brief comment on Ron Howard’s film Apollo 13. It was actually a woman who used her math skills to bring the crew back to Earth. Her name is Francis Northcutt; she is a mathematician and was responsible for several of NASA’s Apollo programs (Wolfangel, 2019). The director, who otherwise sticks closely to the actual events, omits this fact. The only role he allowed for the women in the film was that of waiting (for men) and crying (about men).

References

Academy of Sciences and Humanities in Hamburg. (2015, January 22). *Beschleunigung—Symptom unserer Zeit? Akademievorlesung von Hartmut Rosa*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q2VlMWBfdUY

BAS. (2017a). Out of the blue. From the provisional to improvisation. International Symposium, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin. https://www.udk-berlin.de/en/research/bas/publications/out-of-the-blue-from-the-provisional-to-improvisation/

BAS. (2017b). Workshop 1: *The Improvising Chancellor*, Out of the blue. International Symposium, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin. https://www.udk-berlin.de/en/research/bas/publications/out-of-the-blue-from-the-provisional-to-improvisation/

Bédé, A. (2016). Grundsätze und Leitlinien zum Führen von (Unternehmens-) Krisenstäben. In G. Hofinger & R. Heimann (Eds.), *Handbuch Stabsarbeit* (pp. 89–95). Springer Verlag.

Bjornerud, M. (2018). *Timefulness. How thinking like a geologist can help save the world*. Princeton University Press.

Brandstätter, U. (2008). *Grundfragen der Ästhetik. Bild—Musik—Sprache—Körper*. Böhlau Verlag Köln.

Bujard, M., Laß, I., Diabaté, S., Sulak, H. & Schneider, N. F. (2020). *Eltern während der Corona-Krise: Zur Improvisation gezwungen*. Wiesbaden: Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung. https://doi.org/10.12765/bro-2020-01

Costner, K. (Dir.). (1990). *Dances with wolves* (film). Tig Productions, Majestic Films International.

Dörre, K. (2020). Nicht jede Krise ist eine Chance. *Jacobin Magazine*. https://www.jacobin.de/artikel/klaus-dorre-corona-krise-chance

Geenen, E. M. (2003). Kollektive Krisen. Katastrophe, Terror, Revolution—Gemeinsamkeiten und Unterschiede. In L. Clausen, E. M. Geenen & E. Macamo (Eds.), *Entsetzliche soziale Prozesse, Theorie und Empirie der Katastrophen, Schriftenreihe—Series, Konflikte, Krisen und Katastrophen in sozialer und kultureller Sicht* (pp. 5–23). LIT.

Goehr, L. (2013). Improvisation impromptu, or, what to do with a broken string. In G. E. Lewis & B. Piekut (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of critical improvisation studies* (Vol. 1, pp. 458–480). Oxford Academic.

Heck, S., & Becker, U. (2022). *Generalist dringend gesucht. Das Problem monothematischer Vorbereitung als Grundlage strategischer Entscheidungen*. Bundesamt für Bevölkerungsschutz und Katastrophenhilfe (Ed.) (BBK Bevölkerungsschutz 1/2022, pp. 7–13). https://www.bbk.bund.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/BSMAG_Artikel/2022-01/2022-01_05.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=3

Hofstadter, D., & Sander, E. (2013). *Surfaces and essences. Analogies as the fuel and fire of thinking*. Basic Books.

Howard, R. (Dir.). (1995). *Apollo 13* (Film). Universal Pictures, Imagine Entertainment.

Kendra, J., & Wachtendorf, T. (2007). Improvisation, creativity, and the art of emergency management. In H. Durmaz, B. Sevinc, A. S. Yayla & S. Ekici (Eds.), *Understanding and responding to terrorism* (pp. 324–335). Sage IOS Press.

Landgraf, E. (2003). *Improvisation: Paradigma moderner Kunstproduktion und Ereignis* (parapluie no. 17, pp. 1–10). Improvisation.

Landgraf, E. (2018). Improvisation, posthumanism, and agency in art (Gerhard Richter painting). *Liminalities: A Journal of Performance Studies*, *14*(1), 207–222.

Lewis, G. E., & Piekut, B. (2013). Introduction: On critical improvisation studies. In *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies* (Vol. 1, pp. 1–36). Oxford University Press.

Mars, K. (2020, April 17). 50 years ago: Apollo 13 crew returns safely to earth. *NASA*. www.nasa.gov/feature/50-years-ago-apollo-13-crew-returns-safely-to-earth

Mascolo, G. (2020, April 4). Ein Virus, das die Welt verändert. *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/coronavirus-pandemie-bill-gates-afrika-demokratie-1.4866864

Mascolo, G. (2023, March 30). Die Kunst des Überlebens. *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, p. 3.

NASA. (n.d.). Apollo 13: The successful failure. https://www.nasa.gov/missions/apollo/apollo-13-mission-details/#:~:text=Apollo 13 was to be,stage successfully impacted the moon.

Neitzel, S., & Welzer, H. (2011). *Soldaten. Protokolle vom Kämpfen, Töten und Sterben*. S. Fischer Verlage.

Rosa, H. (2020a). *Beschleunigung. Die Veränderung der Zeitstrukturen in der Moderne* (12th ed.). Suhrkamp Verlag.
Rosa, H. (2020b). Pfadabhängigkeit, Bifurkationspunkte und die Rolle der Soziologie. *Berliner Journal für Soziologie*, *30*, 191–213.
Schnabel, U. (2020, April 26). Psychologie der Corona-Krise. "Der Panikmechanismus hat extrem gut funktioniert". *DIE ZEIT Online*. https://www.zeit.de/wissen/2020-04/psychologie-corona-krise-klimawandel-kontrollverlust-ohnmacht-maske-hamstern
Strohschneider, S. (2022). *Die Kunst der Stabsarbeit—Ein Essay* (Hofinger, G., & Heimann, R., Eds., pp. 21–26). Springer Verlag.
Thiemann, G. (2022). Programmierte Entscheidungen und Entscheidungshilfen in der Stabsarbeit. In G. Hofinger & R. Heimann (Eds.), *Handbuch Stabsarbeit* (pp. 167–175). Springer Verlag.
Uri, J. (2020, April 14). 50 years ago: "Houston, we've had a problem." *NASA National Aeronautics and Space Administration*. https://www.nasa.gov/history/50-years-ago-houston-weve-had-a-problem/
Voss, M. (2022). *Zustand und Zukunft des Bevölkerungsschutzes in Deutschland—Lessons to learn* (KFS Working Paper no. 20, version 4). Katastrophenforschungsstelle. https://www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/833112/ec6675cfb2d21bbc8a6c052181149f64/A-Drs-19-4-793-E-data.pdf
Voss, M., Dittmer, C., Schulze, K., Rüger, A., & Bock, N. (2022). *Katastrophenbewältigung als sozialer Prozess: Vom Ideal- zum Realverständnis von Risiko-, Krisen- und Katastrophenmanagement* (Notfallvorsorge 1/2022). Walhalla Fachverlag.
Weick, K. E. (1990). The vulnerable system: An analysis of the Tenerife air disaster. *Journal of Management*, *16*, 571–593.
Weick, K. E. (1996). Drop your tools: An allegory for organizational studies. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *41*(2), 301–313.
Welzer, H. (2017, October 27–29). *Who acts when and why not?* in BAS (2017): Out of the blue. From the provisional to improvisation. International Symposium, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin. https://www.udk-berlin.de/fileadmin/2_dezentral/Forschung/FR_Postgraduales_Forum/Harald_Welzer_ENG_HKW_2017.pdf
Wolfangel, E. (2019). Frauen in der US-Raumfahrt. *Rechnen und Computer galten als Frauenzeug*, (Radioshow). https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/frauen-in-der-us-raumfahrt-rechnen-und-computer-galten-als.1148.de.html?dram:article_id=453726

Part II

Methodological Perspectives

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

8 Introductory Reflections on New Challenges for Ethnographic Research in Educational Practices

Georg Rißler

New Challenges for Ethnographic Research in Educational Practices

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the expression *challenge* can be defined as '([t]he situation of being faced with) something that needs great mental or physical effort in order to be done successfully and therefore tests a person's ability' and also as 'a questioning or expression of doubt about the truth or purpose of something'. The noun *new*, in turn, can be defined as '[r]ecently created or having started to exist recently and different from one that existed earlier'. Definitions such as these elicit some follow-up questions regarding the topic of new challenges for ethnographic research in educational practice. What might such 'something(s)' be that provoke great mental and/or physical effort so as to be done successfully and thus test the skills of an ethnographer of educational practice? What are the 'somethings' that have evolved recently, exist for the first time or have not existed before? Furthermore, what might the abilities be of the respective person—ethnographer, participant, recipient—that are tested in the process? And anyway, what does 'done successfully' mean in ethnography?

While addressing these questions is challenging in itself, the topic of 'challenges' (Rashid et al., 2015) or 'problems' (Hammersley, 2006) for ethnographic research in educational practices is not novel, but rather a theme that has persisted historically. Ethnography in its myriad forms is inherently challenging[1]: There are no fixed rules on how to (successfully) conduct ethnographic research, for example, how to enter the field (successfully) or how to write field notes (successfully),[2] nor can any fixed criteria be identified as to what counts as successful.[3] Elements of surprise, ethnography's inherent openness, its flexibility, the possibility of being challenged by unexpected incidents happening *in situ*[4] arguably imbue ethnography with its unique character, presenting continuous challenges, eliciting new questions, requiring decision-making, and thus engendering a spectrum of challenges across all its variants. The capacity to adapt to these challenges may serve as a fundamental prerequisite for the 'successful' conduct of ethnographic research. Conversely, encountering obstacles may also offer opportunities for deeper

DOI: 10.4324/9781032629384-11

This chapter has been made available under a (CC-BY-NC-ND) 4.0 license.

field understanding, suggesting that both successes and failures can contribute to a comprehensive grasp of the field (Budde, 2014). In such an understanding, challenges are immanent to ethnography and a 'successful' ethnographer is characterized by the ability to face these challenges, whereby both the solution and the failure can ultimately be considered a success. Having said this, in order to approach the questions raised, it is perhaps best to do what ethnographers do: Enter the field, study (at firsthand) what people do, say and/or write in documents, and try to trace and understand what they mark as new challenges for ethnography.[5]

In an article published in 2006, Hammersley (2006) underscores prevailing and overarching 'problems'[6] within ethnography, including 'spatial and temporal parameters of data collection and the nature of sociocultural phenomena' but also questions about 'how context should be taken into account, what can and cannot be inferred from particular sorts of data, and indeed issues about the very purpose of ethnographic work' (Hammersley, 2006, p. 11). Nearly two decades later, such comprehensive challenges remain pertinent, as evidenced by Meier (2019), who identifies 'areas of tension in ethnographic (school and classroom) research', or Lähdesmäki et al. (2020), who delve into the 'challenges and solutions of ethnographic research'. Another example can be found in the Wiley Handbook of Ethnography of Education (Beach et al., 2020), where a search for the term 'challenge' results in 134 occurrences.

Among the prominent challenges discussed in the handbook are those related to the inherent multidisciplinarity of the ethnography of education, to language barriers, and to reception routines associated with the neglect of some traditions (Maeder, 2020, p. 169). Challenges also arise between critical ethnography and conventional ethnography (Eisenhart 2018). One of these challenges refers to the theme of change itself, while other challenges relate to changing concepts, for example, of the concept of culture, and the implications for new forms of educational ethnography and related methodological advancements (Eisenhart, 2001, 2018). Such considerations relate to more recent developments such as the 'practice turn in contemporary theory' (Knorr- Cetina et al., 2000). In German educational ethnography, this turn has led to a tradition focused on detailed microanalysis of educational practices (Sieber Egger & Unterweger, 2020). Recently, there has been an effort to apply practice–theoretical concepts beyond local microanalysis, stimulating methodological debates on how to research large-scale social phenomena. These discussions are further connected to the challenges of adopting a broader or even global perspective, as explored in approaches such as meta-ethnography (Kakos & Fritzsche, 2020) and multisited ethnography (Marcus, 1999; Jaeger & Nieswand, 2022).

Another dimension of such research pertains to its implementation, which frequently occurs within international collaborations (Kenway et al., 2020; Jarzabkowski et al., 2015; Clerke & Hopwood, 2014) involving multiple ethnographers. However, the dynamics of ethnographic team research or

innovative collaborative research practices—and specifically, the complexities associated with generating ethnographic knowledge through intensive interaction within research teams (Koskinen-Koivisto et al., 2020)—represent a relatively unexplored area within ethnography. Despite the historical precedent of ethnographic teams conducting research for many decades (Clerke & Hopwood, 2014), contemporary debates are emerging or being reinvigorated around issues such as power dynamics, data storage and sharing practices across various times and spaces, as indeed the negotiation of interpretations within the context of collaborative and team-based ethnographic work.

The expansion of the participants in ethnographic research reflects a contemporary and challenging domain, transcending mere human diversity and collaborative methodologies. This arena ventures into the realm of more-than-human entities, as explored in multispecies ethnographies (Ameli, 2022), or ethnography after humanism (Hamilton & Taylor, 2017).[7] The inclusion of more-than-human perspectives introduces complex dilemmas for ethnographers, notably due to the nonverbal communication modes of nonhuman subjects (Hamilton & Taylor, 2017). The challenge of decentring the human within the decidedly humanist practice of ethnographic research cannot be underestimated (Pacini-Ketchabaw et al., 2016). Although it could be argued that nonhuman elements have always been part of, for example, anthropological studies (Lien & Pálsson, 2021), recent posthumanist and new materialist theories offer fresh and more inclusive lenses through which to reconsider the social. These perspectives advocate for understanding more-than-human sociality (Tsing, 2015a) and processes of 'multispecies world-making' (Tsing, 2015b).

Similar to the manner in which nonhuman elements have been foundational yet often overlooked, visual methodologies have a well-established history within ethnographic research (Pink, 2021) and have been recognized as a core component from its inception (Everri et al., 2020). New discussions surrounding visual methods in ethnography encompass ethical considerations (Everri et al., 2020, p. 68) and methodological challenges (Alfonso et al., 2004), as well as issues related to access, dissemination and publication (Holm, 2020).

All of the discussions mentioned here are intrinsically connected to a broader examination of power dynamics, representation, the valuation of specific data types, and ethical concerns, all of which are revisited within particular contexts and against the backdrop of established traditions. It is evident that the challenges ethnographies of educational practices face have undergone multiple cycles of reinterpretation (Turunen et al., 2020), now further enriched by additional reflections that may introduce more nuanced (micro-) changes. The landscape of educational ethnography is undeniably filled with challenges, some of which may be considered novel, while others are adaptations or reevaluations of existing issues. In any case, the field of ethnography continues to evolve dynamically.

Notes

1 Each of the steps in an ethnographic research process is associated not only with challenges but also with analytical potential (Bollig & Schulz, 2019).
2 With the further questions: 'Whose reality do they represent, how is this reality portrayed, and who judges its validity?' (Jeffrey, 2020, p. 142).
3 Even if there is a set of quality criteria (Breidenstein et al., 2015, pp. 211–215), the question arises as to whether these alone are sufficient to assess ethnography as (not) being successful. There are enough reasons to doubt this.
4 Even a connection between 'challenges' and the 'new' is suggested: '. . . unexpected incidents happening *in situ* and related to serendipity, unpredictability, immediacy of embodied experiences, affects or cognitive confusion can serve to generate new insights for the ethnographer and can be turned into a means for gaining ethnographic knowledge' (Koskinen-Koivisto et al., 2020, p. xxi).
5 A sidenote is required here: introductory reflections are not systematisations. The following remarks do not even pretend to be systematising or to offer conclusive answers. Rather, they merely address some aspects.
6 To mark something as a problem or challenge is certainly not the same as. In the present context, however, I take the liberty of seeing the two as being closely related.
7 Lien & Pálsson (2021, p. 5) argue that the 'other-than-human' has been integral to the anthropological discipline since its very beginning. Sidelined by human-centred theoretical pursuits, such examples of ethnographic holism have sometimes received less attention than they deserve' though.

References

Alfonso, A. I., Kurti, L., & Pink, S. (Eds.). (2004). *Working images: Visual research and representation in ethnography*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203769362
Ameli, K. (2022). *Multispecies ethnography: Methodology of a holistic research approach of humans, animals, nature, and culture*. Lexington Books.
Beach, D., Bagley, C., & Da Silva, S. M. (Eds.). (2020). *The Wiley handbook of ethnography of education*. John Wiley & Sons.
Bollig, S., & Schulz, M. (2019). Ethnografie. In J.-M. Lorenzen, L.-M. Schmidt, & D. Zifonun (Eds.), *Methodologien und Methoden der Bildungsforschung: Quantitative und qualitative Verfahren und ihre Verbindungen* (pp. 32–45). Beltz Juventa.
Breidenstein, G., Hirschauer, S., Kalthoff, H., & Nieswand, B. (2015). *Ethnografie: Die Praxis der Feldforschung*. UTB.
Budde, J. (2014). Differenz beobachten? In A. Tervooren, N. Engel, M. Göhlich, I. Miethe, & S. Reh (Eds.), *Ethnographie und Differenz in pädagogischen Feldern* (pp. 133–148). transcript Verlag. https://doi.org/10.1515/transcript.9783839422458.133
Clerke, T., & Hopwood, N. (2014). *Doing ethnography in teams*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-05618-0
Eisenhart, M. E. (2001). Changing conceptions of culture and ethnographic methodology: Recent thematic shifts and their implications for research on teaching. In V. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (pp. 209–225). American Educational Research Association.
Eisenhart, M. E. (2018). Changing conceptions of culture and ethnography in anthropology of education in the United States. In D. Beach, C. Bagley, & S. M. Da Silva (Eds.), *The Wiley handbook of ethnography of education*. John Wiley & Sons.
Everri, M., Heitmayer, M., Yamin, P., & Lahlou, S. (2020). Ethical challenges of using video for qualitative research and ethnography: State of the art and guidelines. In T.

Lähdesmäki, E. Koskinen-Koivisto, V. L. Čeginskas, & A.-K. Koistinen (Eds.), *Challenges and solutions in ethnographic research: Ethnography with a twist* (pp. 68–83). Routledge.

Hamilton, L., & Taylor, N. (2017). *Ethnography after humanism: Power, politics and method in multi-species research.* Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-53933-5

Hammersley, M. (2006). Ethnography: Problems and prospects. *Ethnography and Education*, *1*(1), 3–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/17457820500512697

Holm, G. (2020). Visual ethnography in education. In D. Beach, C. Bagley, & S. M. Da Silva (Eds.), *The Wiley handbook of ethnography of education.* John Wiley & Sons.

Jaeger, U., & Nieswand, B. (2022). Multi-sited ethnography zwischen Lokalisierung und Mobilisierung, oder: 'Should I stay or should I go now?' In A. Poferl & N. Schröer (Eds.), *Handbuch Soziologische Ethnographie* (pp. 477–487). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-26405-5_29

Jarzabkowski, P., Bednarek, R., & Cabantous, L. (2015). Conducting global team-based ethnography: Methodological challenges and practical methods. *Human Relations*, *68*(1), 3–33. https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726714535449

Jeffrey, B. (2020). Ethnographic writing. In D. Beach, C. Bagley, & S. M. Da Silva (Eds.), *The Wiley handbook of ethnography of education.* John Wiley & Sons.

Kakos, M., & Fritzsche, B. (2020). *Meta-ethnographic synthesis in education.* Routledge.

Kenway, J., Fahey, J., Epstein, D., Koh, A., McCarthy, C., & Fazal Rizvi. (2020). Multisited global ethnography and elite schools: A methodological entrée. In D. Beach, C. Bagley, & S. M. Da Silva (Eds.), *The Wiley handbook of ethnography of education.* John Wiley & Sons.

Knorr Cetina, K., Schatzki, T. R., & von Savigny, E. (Eds.). (2000). *The practice turn in contemporary theory.* Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203977453

Koskinen-Koivisto, E., Lähdesmäki, T., & Ceginskas Viktorija, L. A. (2020). Introduction: Ethnography with a twist. In T. Lähdesmäki, E. Koskinen-Koivisto, V. L. Čeginskas, & A.-K. Koistinen (Eds.), *Challenges and solutions in ethnographic research: Ethnography with a twist* (pp. xx–xxix). Routledge.

Lähdesmäki, T., Koskinen-Koivisto, E., Čeginskas, V. L., & Koistinen, A.-K. (Eds.). (2020). *Challenges and solutions in ethnographic research: Ethnography with a twist.* Routledge.

Lien, M. E., & Pálsson, G. (2021). Ethnography beyond the human: The 'other-than-human' in ethnographic work. *Ethnos*, *86*(1), 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/00141844.2019.1628796

Maeder, C. (2020). What can be learnt? Educational ethnography, the sociology of knowledge, and ethnomethodology. In D. Beach, C. Bagley, & S. M. Da Silva (Eds.), *The Wiley handbook of ethnography of education.* John Wiley & Sons.

Marcus, G. E. (Ed.). (1999). *Ethnography through thick and thin.* Princeton University Press. https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400851805

Meier, M. (2019). Spannungsfelder ethnographischer (Schul- und Unterrichts-) Forschung. In J.-M. Lorenzen, L.-M. Schmidt, & D. Zifonun (Eds.), *Methodologien und Methoden der Bildungsforschung: Quantitative und qualitative Verfahren und ihre Verbindungen* (pp. 46–66). Juventa.

Pacini-Ketchabaw, V., Taylor, A., & Blaise, M. (2016). Decentring the human in multispecies ethnographies. In C. A. Taylor & C. Hughes (Eds.), *Posthuman research practices in education* (pp. 149–167). Palgrave Macmillan.

Pink, S. (2021). *Doing visual ethnography* (4th ed.). SAGE.

Rashid, M., Caine, V., & Goez, H. (2015). The encounters and challenges of ethnography as a methodology in health research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *14*(5), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406915621421

Sieber Egger, A., & Unterweger, G. (2020). Ethnographic research in schools: Historical roots and developments with a focus on Germany and Switzerland. In D. Beach, C. Bagley, & S. M. Da Silva (Eds.), *The Wiley handbook of ethnography of education* (pp. 281–308). John Wiley & Sons.

Tsing, A. L. (2015a). More-than-human sociality: A call for critical description. In K. Hastrup (Ed.), *Anthropology and nature* (pp. 27–42). Routledge.

Tsing, A. L. (2015b). *Mushroom at the end of the world: On the possibility of life in capitalist ruins.* Princeton University Press.

Turunen, J., Čeginskas, V. L. A., Kaasik-Krogerus, S., Lähdesmäki, T., & Mäkinen, K. (2020). Poly-space: Creating new concepts through reflexive team ethnography. In T. Lähdesmäki, E. Koskinen-Koivisto, V. L. Čeginskas, & A.-K. Koistinen (Eds.), *Challenges and solutions in ethnographic research: Ethnography with a twist* (pp. 3–20). Routledge.

9 Outline of a New Practice–Theoretical Conception for Ethnographic Research of Larger Nexuses

Constellations Ethnography

Jürgen Budde, Johanna Geßner-Ott and Georg Rißler

Introduction

The 'practice turn in contemporary theory' (Knorr-Cetina et al., 2001) is a relatively new development in the field of social theories. Innovative concepts on the 'nature of the social' and on the study of social phenomena are emerging with it and have had their impact in international educational research for some years. To date, educational studies grounded in practice theory have primarily used ethnographic methods to examine a variety of relatively 'small' phenomena *in situ*, understood as 'social phenomena that either characterise or are constituted by small nexuses of action, coordinated activity and face-to-face interaction in contiguous settings' (Schatzki, 2016a, p. 4). Debates about larger phenomena reaching beyond or characterised by a hanging together of these localised smaller nexuses of action rarely take place. In contrast to 'relatively bounded cases and examples' (Shove, 2023, p. 2), 'larger' cases are likewise rarely targeted in ethnographic research in education. Not least because of associated methodological–methodical challenges. However, since practice theories claim to be able to even grasp global networks, new connections and adaptations between practice theory and ethnography are required. Such new connections prepare the grounds to explore and examine, for example, the educational system as a large phenomenon or larger constellations as sections of it.

To make these observations manageable for ethnographic research, several successive theoretical determinations are provided hereunder. In a first step, the relationship between 'small' and 'large' phenomena is substantiated. Second, basic elements of Schatzki's theory of social practices are described. These serve as a starting point for conceptualising a constellations ethnography. Third, we outline considerations for a substantive definition of linking modes. The fourth step consists of the presentation of constellation mapping as a potential method of analysis.

DOI: 10.4324/9781032629384-12

This chapter has been made available under a (CC-BY-NC-ND) 4.0 license.

From Small to Large: From Local Practices in Settings to Constellations Beyond Settings

Practice theories claim to rethink and innovate the nature of the social and the study of social phenomena. In recent years, they have found their way into international debates in educational research (Grootenboer et al., 2017; Lynch et al., 2018).[1] Likewise, they are increasingly the subject of methodological debates in educational inquiry (Rowlands et al., 2020; Rißler et al., 2023).[2] As a research programme, practice theory is generally characterised by a 'close intertwining of theory, methodology and empiricism' (Schäfer, 2013, p. 14, chapter authors' translation). Ethnographic procedures in particular are understood as their corresponding method (Reckwitz, 2008, p. 196). Participation, the experience and observation of activities, bodies and material things *in situ* with all senses, as well as the reconstruction of practical enactments and (pedagogical) practices in (pedagogical) settings—such as care, personality development, performance in school and teaching—are considered central methods that have already proven themselves in a great variety of research on education (cf. Delamont, 2014; Beach et al., 2018).

Nevertheless, challenges arise when the focus shifts from small(er) to large(r) phenomena and brings a hitherto neglected perspective to the fore. Ethnography and theories of social practices are confronted with critical inquiries as to whether they are suitable or unsuitable for studies of larger constellations and phenomena. The critical tenor is that they are best suited for microsocial phenomena, with analyses of processes thus unfolding successively in local settings.[3] It is assumed 'that practices are more or only useful for attending to the minutiae of daily life or to micro-social phenomena' (Blue, 2019, p. 929). This is because most research—and this applies beyond the field of education—has focused to date on the unfolding of precisely such 'small' phenomena in 'local contiguous settings' (Schatzki, 2016a, p. 4). Thus, a central point of critique is that practice theories' strengths lie in the analysis of small phenomena such as local–situational practices and interactions (cf. Sieber et al., 2018, p. 240). In contrast, there is hardly any practice theory research on phenomena beyond these local settings and 'small nexuses of action' (Schatzki, 2016a, p. 4).[4] We argue that this is not due to a lack of practice theoretical concepts or limitations of ethnography. Instead, this is the result of a widespread lack of methodological–methodical reflections that connects both practice theories and ethnography. Recent developments in the context of a 'multiscale ethnographic design' have counteracted this bias (Eisenhart, 2017, p. 134)[5], although without their being explicitly grounded in practice theory. Additionally, some practice–theoretical concepts now exist that oppose the charge of a supposed reduction to 'trifles', such as the work of Shove (2023) or Schatzki (2011, 2016a, 2016b). Predominantly however, research remains limited to specific practices in specific settings.

This argumentation does not deny the high value of such microanalyses or the necessity to investigate them. But it remains evident that classical macrosocial explanatory patterns are resorted to when researching small details. Often in a roundabout way, practices are classified in supposedly larger contexts or

explained by recourse to them. Instead of resorting to practice–theoretical concepts, practices are frequently described as being determined by other levels: discourses, social spaces, or macrostructures (Davis et al., 2009; Connolly, 2000). Not only does this apply to concepts such as inequality, which are related to sociological micro–macro distinctions, but also to genuinely pedagogical practices. The question arises of how a practice can be analytically determined as a specific one. For example, which practices are evident in the classroom: peer practices, learning practices, teaching practices? How are these practices, which are parallelised in time and space, related to each other? Do they take place separately, do they overlap, or are they closely related, for example, do they refer to common organisational elements, or do they have activities in common? In most cases, concepts are used that do not originate from the local–situational context but which apply their content to the practice 'from the outside', so to speak.

Despite the importance of researching local–situational pedagogical practices, we argue for a broadening of the perspective beyond a differentiation of levels and provide a conceptual proposal for this. Our starting point is Schatzki's theory of social practices. Conceptualised as a flat ontology, it provides concepts and a terminology for larger constellations. It also claims to understand large social phenomena, such as the education system, 'as constellations of, aspects of, or rooted in practices' (Schatzki, 2016b, pp. 28–29).

Accordingly, we assume that constellations do not follow a micro–macro or macro–micro explanatory pattern. Rather, 'that which constitutes a given phenomenon extends to a single level of reality' (Schatzki, 2016b, p. 30). Neither ideas of the determinacy of activities by discourses (supposedly external to any action), social spaces, or macrostructures nor an overestimation of the autonomy of persons to act in the face of framing contexts characterise this flat ontology, but rather notions of relational interconnectedness on one single level. Activities and practices link with material arrangement to form bundles, the interweaving of which results in larger ones, that is, constellations. It follows that in some sense and depending on the degree of detail, 'everything is related to everything else at the same level'. As plausible as this assumption seams at first glance, it requires further systematisation (to do justice to the claim of being able) to incorporate novelty into ethnographic research.

Practice Theoretical Foundation

To establish theoretical systematics, a defined vocabulary that substantiates the practice–theoretical perspective is required. The terms activity, action, practices, arrangement, bundles, and constellation are particularly relevant for our approach. According to Schatzki's account, a practice is to be understood as a 'nexus of doings and sayings' (Schatzki, 2016b, p. 33). Such nexuses are not random but establish specific orders. Thus, practices are considered as ordered–organised–interrelated nexuses of activity/action and not as an arbitrary coexistence of single-isolated activities. At the same time, Schatzki's conception identifies further characteristics of practices: They are viewed as being 'open-unclosed-unlimited-evolving' and spatiotemporally distributed varieties

of human doings and sayings. Following their spatiotemporal dispersion practices as 'blocks' do not necessarily unfold in 'stable' settings—such as the classroom. Although since practice–theoretically oriented studies refer to such settings, they limit participant observation to components of practices. While practices as 'entities' can be analytically focused, they are not directly observable. Instead, they are the result of reconstructive approximations and must be regarded as precarious intermediate states because of the potential dynamics of practices. Even comparatively simple practices (such as a pedagogical explanation) can 'extend' across objective space and objective time and are not necessarily limited to local–situational settings and a specific timeframe.

Practices unfold in and amid material arrangements. Material arrangements—in Schatzki's approach—are interlinked arrangements of human bodies, organisms, artifacts and natural things, by and large arranged in practices. Both—practices and material arrangements—link to form bundles through different modes. 'A practice-arrangement bundle is linked sets of organised doings and sayings that are performed amid interconnected, continuous or discontinuous material arrangements' (Schatzki, 2013, p. 77). Bundles can thus be deemed to be ordered–organised entities of practices and arrangements. Such practice–arrangement bundles, in turn, link with other bundles. However, not only do bundles link with each other, but practices (such as explaining) and arrangements (such as ordered–organised classrooms consisting of desks, blackboards, etc.) can also relate to each other either by comprising the same elements, by taking place in similar ways or exhibiting similar orders. Bundles link as well and result in increasingly larger or more expansive and complex bundles. Schatzki initially termed larger bundles 'nets, confederations' (Schatzki, 2002, p. 286) and subsequently 'constellations' (Schatzki, 2019, p. 44). Thus, educational constellations ethnography informed by practice theory is primarily concerned with links and relations (see Figure 9.1).

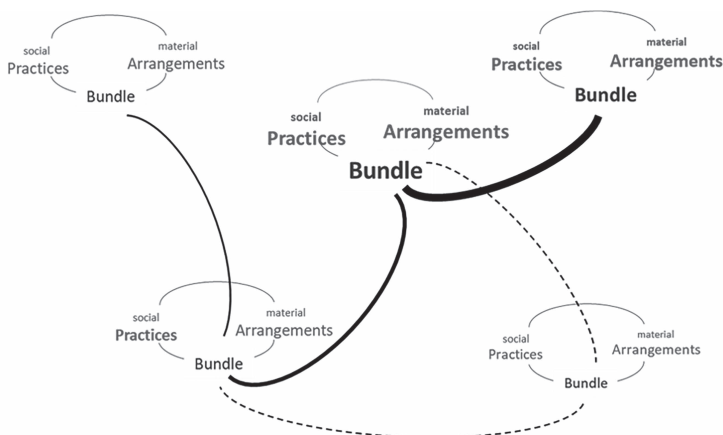

Figure 9.1 Relationships in and between bundles.

Source: chapter authors' representation

From Complexity to Social Order

Against the background of this complex conception of a flat ontology, the question of the character of relations and linkages arises. As argued, flat ontology emphasises relations, links, and connections on one single level. For this perspective not to appear arbitrary or overcomplex in the sense of 'everything is linked and connected with everything', theoretical–methodological clarifications must be made. Thus (to stay with this example), teaching depends on numerous factors such as the spaces and spatiality of the classroom, the school, or the teachers' room, as well as on professional orientations, legal requirements, the educational policy ideas of the respective governments, the didactic material, etc. The list is unfinished and expandable. Historically, it reaches back to the beginning of the modern school. Institutionally, it relates to the manuals of current teacher training programmes. Similar lists could be formulated for other pedagogical phenomena, such as family education. As convincing as this argument may appear theoretically, it remains empirically impracticable in its further application, at least unless something is said about the modes—the manner or the criteria—of linkage. This is because the confusing totality of the social makes any systematisation seem impossible.

Indeed, if the concept of a flat ontology were to imply only an unsystematic pure description of practice without organising criteria, ethnographic analysis would be unfeasible. The very object of knowledge could not be pinned down. And much less could 'relevancy', links, or relations between the relevant be distinguished from irrelevancy or relations between the irrelevant. For not everything is of the same relevance for the practice of school teaching. Thus, a further theoretical determination of constellations is necessary that enables a systematising order beyond hierarchising level models. Schatzki offers ways of describing relations. Practices can relate to other practices in the five modes of (1) common organisation, (2) orchestrated organisation, (3) shared activities, (4) chains of actions, and (5) intentionality. Causality, prefiguration, constitution, intentionality, or intelligibility, in turn, relate practices to arrangements or practice–arrangement bundles to other practice–arrangement bundles resulting in constellations. What seems to be problematic about these proposals is that they do not have a recognisable systematic in themselves, for it is neither clear whether the differentiations of the respective five modes are exhaustive nor is an internal structure recognisable. Do joint organisation, shared activities, and intentionality, for example, refer to a common point of reference, or do they instead outline (quite) different variants of some linking? For this reason, a systematising proposal is presented hereunder with the constellation analysis that provides possibilities for empirical processing. Regarding the question of how relations can be described and evaluated in larger contexts, we propose two different determination possibilities (cf. Figure 9.2).

First, relations can be described in terms of density. This does not mean the quantitative intensity of the relations, but rather the 'thickness of the relation'. Ethnographically speaking, this refers to the extent of significance in (and for)

Linking-modes	**1. Density** *‚strengts of the relation‘*	1.a) research question
		1.b) empirical research
	2. Quality organizing factors	2.a) programms
		2.b) explicit rules
		2.c) intentionality
		2.d) values and norms
		2.e) implicit rules
		2.f) emotions
		2.g) routines

Figure 9.2 Model of the linking modes in practice–arrangement bundles.

routinised conduct. As briefly illustrated by the example of teaching, factors such as spatial conditions or legal and educational policy requirements presumably play a role. However, it must be assumed and empirically clarified to what extent didactic materials and professional orientations shape practice *in situ* more directly and in a more significant way than do other factors. Density is not a simple statistical number—which could not be reconstructed ethnographically—but rather the 'extent of significance', that is, the condensation of relevance related to a concrete, analytical starting point within the practice. The 'extent of significance' is constituted by two factors: first, by the research question itself. This, after all, already directs a specific focus on the practices. No ethnography does research 'just for fun'. Every research is guided by a specific and theoretically justified research interest, as well as by the 'insertion' of the research at a specific point—for instance, the classroom, in educational archives, performance, or disciplining. In this respect, the research question necessarily conditions the object but (as widely discussed in gender studies in relation to reification) would, at the same time, have to satisfy the requirement of not determining and thus fixing it. Moreover, the 'extent of significance' becomes empirically recognisable if things become relevant. What is given meaning by the actors becomes apparent in doings and sayings and is thus accessible to empirical analysis. Relevancies are not universal, but rather show greater and lesser 'density'. Relevancy of doings and things dissolves where other doings and things become more relevant.[6] Using the example of epistemological discourses on reification in educational gender research, these two aspects can be concretised: The relevance of gender for school teaching can be set by the epistemological interest (e.g., with gender-related patterns of interpretation among teachers), or it can appear as a relevant topic of the field (e.g., in gender-differentiated addressing within the classroom). Only the interaction of both aspects meets the standards of reconstructive research. Thus, density can be used to describe the relevance of an aspect for

a phenomenon and to prioritise it. Spots are thus created and mapped in the complexity of social practice, and order can be described.

Second, the quality of relations matters, especially for ethnographic studies. For a systematising description of relations, it is not only relevant who or what is related to each other how and how thickly but also in which form, with which content, and in which direction. However, it is precisely this assumption that is problematic for many ethnographies informed by educational theory. They describe practices but are barely able to derive further analytical conclusions from these descriptions (Huf & Kluge, 2021). This is problematic because we have to assume that it is precisely here that references to the pedagogical present themselves. Pedagogy as practice that is always intentionally oriented towards specific goals (in a double sense, the execution of the practice in the present and a change of practices in the future) is fundamentally charged with numerous meanings. Pedagogical practice points beyond itself and its execution, and as such must be the object of ethnographic studies.

This content is essentially determined by what Schatzki describes with the term organisational elements. By this he means explicit as well as implicit rules, and teleoaffectivity as well as understandings. However, this description seems rather unsatisfactory to us. For neither do the systematics become recognisable nor does it become clear whether this enumeration is complete. Therefore, we focus on some aspects, revise them, and describe them as organisational factors, with regard to the specific conditions of pedagogical practices and their ethnographic analysis. A system is proposed that heuristically arranges the factors on a continuum between explicit and implicit organisational factors (cf. Figure 9.3). Empirical and theoretical considerations lead us to propose heuristic differentiation of the content of bundles and their relation to other bundles based on the following seven factors: (a) programmatic, (b) explicit rules (in the sense of instructions for use), (c) practical intentionality (goals and intentions in performance), (d) values and norms, (e) implicit rules and assumptions, (f) emotions (affects and desires), and (g) routines of action. All factors have implicit as well as explicit parts, but in differing degrees of importance. While, for example, programmatic approaches become explicit

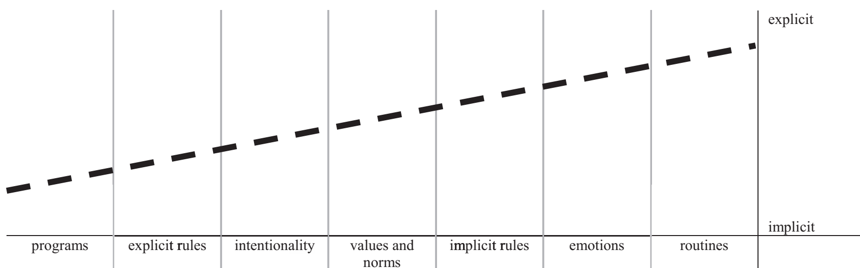

Figure 9.3 Organisational factors.

Source: chapter authors' representation

(e.g., in support programmes for the professionalisation of teachers), routines (e.g., disciplining) remain primarily implicit. We assume that different factors play a role in each practice, but not all of them with the same relevance. Furthermore, we presume that the factors overlap in practice, while at the same time, this differentiation proves useful in data analysis.

This double perspective on density opens up possibilities to describe the relations of practice–arrangement bundles systematically and to show which elements are preferentially related to each other. By adding the content through the organisational factors, it is additionally possible to present foci for the analysis and to describe in which way what is preferentially related to what, that is, which content the social order has. This enables a theory-based description of the pedagogical order.

Methodological Implications: From Action to Situation—From Practices to Constellations

The ethnographic constellation analysis aims to provide outlines of manifold-complex and reciprocal linkages between different practices and bundles. The constellation analysis broadens the ethnographic research of social phenomena and contours it in a new way in that it does not focus solely on the activities of practices carried out in a local setting and their (un-)intended effects. The subject matter is less 'isolated' in practices on the micro level of settings or somewhat smallish bundles (such as lessons in the classroom/school building), unlike relations between practices and their mutual interrelations in large constellations. Compared to ethnographic approaches such as multisited ethnographies or meta-ethnographies, however, a constellations ethnography is more comprehensive, can reveal a broader spectrum of relations with theoretical guidance, and thus contributes to an innovative development of ethnography.[7]

For the ethnographic research of constellations, a method is offered that combines field research with elements of Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM) and cartographic approaches. GTM, as an iterative–circular method, allows for a structuring approach by linking field research and analytical work in a way that builds upon each other. Constellation analysis provides for a similar productive interweaving of data collection and analysis. The GTM in its classical form (Strauss & Corbin, 1997) underlies an interactionist theory of action (Strauss, 2008). In the decades since its development, there have been various adaptations to other social theoretical approaches. Of specific interest to constellation analysis is Clarke's (2005) work, which sought to incorporate the postmodern turn in theorising with situational analysis. Clarke shifts the focus of inquiry from individuals and their interactions to the 'situation *per se* as the ultimate unit of analysis' (Clarke, 2005, p. XXII). She expands the GTM to include consideration of bodies and nonhuman, material components, acknowledging the complex interconnections. Her qualitative approach turns to multisited arrangements and not only investigates the basal social processes but also explores them embedded within larger contexts (social worlds,

arenas), integrating different kinds of data. These aspects make her approach more useful for our concern of a constellation analysis than does the conventional GTM.

Even though the 'situationist' approach is closer to practice–theoretical approaches than is the original method, it is not transferable without adaptation since it focuses less on social practices and more on the Foucaultian understanding of discourse, placing the situation at the centre of the analysis. The situation analysis is suitable as a building block in a practice–theoretically oriented approach to make the links and interconnections or relations in broader social constellations visible and tangible. It is—in contrast to the conventional GTM—also compatible with flat ontology because it rejects the hierarchisation of social levels (Clarke, 2015, p. 96 ff.) in Strauss' (and Corbin's) coding paradigm. To analyse constellations and their relations, we suggest a three-step mapping procedure.

Coding of Practices, Materialities, and Organisational Factors

In a first step, ethnographic data collection is conducted in the practices and bundles relevant to the research, which is then coded in an accompanying practice–theory-oriented manner. The practice–theoretical (open) coding is oriented towards the classical open coding of the GTM and serves to open the material collected so as to make it manageable for the research process. For this purpose, the GTM provides for a small-step (line-by-line) analytical processing of the material in the process. For practice–theoretical research projects, it seems to make more sense to question the material with regard to the practices, materialities, and organisational elements to be found there and to work less with the action–theoretically influenced impulses and guiding questions of the classical GTM. Instead, the following guiding questions can provide orientation (cf. Figure 9.4).

Guiding questions for analysis	
	The unfolding of which doings and sayings can be found in the data?
	How are bodies and things involved in the activities unfolding?
	Which bodies and things are present in the settings?
	Which spaces are the sites of the activities unfolding ?
	Which spaces are established in the activities unfolding?
	Which temporal aspects, e.g. sequences and rhythms unfold in the settings researched?
	Which aims, rules, values, norms, emotions etc.,are expressed implicitly and explicitly.

Figure 9.4 Guiding questions for analysis.

For the analytical process, we propose thinking experimentally about activities and statements that have not been done or made, as well as materialities and organisational factors that are not present, so as to focus on unoccupied positions in the constellation and in this way create 'spots'. It could be helpful to work with the analytical tools proposed by Corbin and Strauss (2008, p. 69 ff.), such as the flip–flop technique, for example, to identify the absent or silent items. From the first codes, preliminary concepts are developed with which further work can be done in the subsequent steps.

Mapping of the Constellation

In a second step, the concepts extracted from the material are visualised in a 'constellation map'. In the first phase of mapping the constellation, the concepts of the practice–arrangement bundles elaborated in the coding are still noted in an unordered way. In the following analysis process, these are examined in their relations to each other. The aim is to analyse the relations within the practice–arrangement bundles, as well as between the different practice–arrangement bundles of the constellation, using a two-phase working method.

Sorting the elements: First, there is a phase of sorting the concepts in which the relations between the concepts developed in the material are elaborated and mapped. It is necessary to clarify how the coded practices, arrangements, and organisational items are related to each other, how the practice–arrangement bundles of the constellation identified relate to each other and which links and connections exist between them.

Determination of the relations: Subsequently, these relations can be determined in their 'density' and 'quality' as described. On the one hand, they are considered in terms of their significance with regard to the research topic and the empirical field; on the other, they are examined in terms of their '(organisational) content'. With the help of the differentiated relations, the constellation is analytically described and condensed. At the same time, more ethnographic material should be collected, coded, and subsequently included in the mapping so as to sort and determine the relations as described and to further elaborate the constellation. The newly collected material provides opportunities for comparisons to test the categories developed, the elements elaborated, and the relations, as well as to further substantiate, expand, or correct them, or to shift them if they prove to be irrelevant. In this way, new versions of the constellation map are created again and again, visualising and documenting the research process and making it comprehensible in its various stages. The mapping provides the opportunity to depict multifaceted relationships and relations in the respective analysed social order.

Selection of the Key Categories of the Constellation

In the iterative–cyclical process of analysing the comparisons and (re)sorting them, the constellation categories central to the research interest and the field under investigation can be selected and condensed, hence permitting

a theorisation of the phenomenon under investigation in the broader context of the constellation. Like the classical GTM, constellation analysis aims to develop empirically saturated theories of medium scope. Accordingly, the third step of the analysis identifies key categories that provide sound answers to the original research questions. The constellation map is reordered with reference to the key categories identified and relations so as to 'integrate them into a consistent theory design' (Strübing, 2018, p. 47), chapter authors' translation) and to prepare the presentation of the findings.

Conclusion

Drawing upon these considerations, an innovative ethnographic approach emerges for analysing larger constellations, incorporating a perspective on constellations and gaining a practice–theoretical vocabulary, having a systematisation of modes of connection through density and content, and mapping. This approach allows for the description of larger and complex practices and phenomena. Furthermore, it reveals perspectives for addressing the explicit pedagogical aspect within the analysis of pedagogical orders from an educational–scientific standpoint. While the practice–theoretical vocabulary itself may not be inherently grounded in educational science, we believe that the methodology proposed presents several entry points for educational research. First, the organisational factors (see Figure 9.2) provide epistemological insights that underline the significance of considering the specific nature of the pedagogical as fundamental to all practices. Second, we posit that adopting a perspective of a flat ontology can effectively reduce the assumption of contradictions within pedagogical practice in favour of an integrative viewpoint. This approach allows for the transcendence of presumed dichotomies, such as intention and effect, front stage and backstage, and individual and society. As a result, constellations ethnography empowers educational analyses to sharpen their focus on the contingent nature of pedagogical orders, highlighting the inherent unity of diverse elements. This processing of contingency occurs within the pedagogical mode through practices of education, learning, teaching, and caregiving.

Notes

1 Among others, the inclusion of contributions on practice-theoretical approaches in handbooks on educational science and pedagogy and their new editions can be seen as evidence of increased attention here (cf. Elven & Schwarz, 2016; Budde & Rißler, 2022).
2 Geographical differences in the connections to specific theoretical variants are evident. In the Scandinavian countries and Australia, for example, the focus seems to be on references to Stephen Kemmis' theory of practice, while this theory is underrepresented in the German-speaking context and connections to Bourdieu and Schatzki seem to dominate.
3 By small social phenomena, Schatzki (2016, p. 4) means 'social phenomena that either characterise or are constituted by small nexuses of action, coordinated activity, and face-to-face interaction in contiguous settings'.

4 In this chapter we refer to a second generation of practice theories with representatives such as Schatzki, Shove, Nicolini and Reckwitz. We have oriented ourselves strongly towards Schatzki's version. In contrast to Bourdieu—as a practice theorist of the first generation—Schatzki (cf. 1996) rejects Bourdieu's concepts of social space and fields, which can themselves be understood as larger contexts. And even ANT (actor-network theory), which tends to be able to grasp larger networks, differs from the co-conception of the theory of social practices, among others, in that ANT does not have a counterpart to the concept of practices as it is designed by the theory of social practices.
5 'Multiscale ethnography captures methodological approaches that follow ideas, practices, discourses, tools, and institutional arrangements as they move or are transported to various sites and situations, through various levels (local, global), and across time.' (Eisenhart, 2018, p. 194).
6 They 'run out', so to speak, just like it is not possible to distinguish in the slack water on the seashore where there is sand and where there is water, while in a broader perspective the beach and sea are out of the question and are clearly recognisable in each case.
7 It is worth noting that we do not assume that this list of relations is complete. Quite the opposite: The list can be extended through relations found empirically.

References

Beach, D., Bagley, C., & Da Silva, S. (Eds.). (2018). *The Wiley handbook of ethnography of education*. John Wiley & Sons.

Blue, S. (2019). Institutional rhythms: Combining practice theory and rhythm analysis to conceptualise processes of institutionalisation. *Time & Society*, *28*(3), 922–950. https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X17702165

Budde, J., & Rißler, G. (2022). Theories of social practices. In H.-H. Krüger, C. Grunert, & K. Ludwig (Eds.), *Handbuch Kindheits- und Jugendforschung* (pp. 1–26). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-24801-7_4-1

Clarke, A. E. (2005). *Situational analysis: Grounded theory after the postmodern turn*. SAGE.

Clarke, A. E. (2015). From grounded theory to situational analysis. What's new? Why? How? In A. E. Clarke, C. Friese, & R. Washburn (Eds.), *Situational analysis in practice* (pp. 84–118). Left Coast Press.

Connolly, P. (2000). Racism and young girls' peer-group relations: The experiences of South Asian girls. *Sociology*, *34*(3), 499–519. https://doi.org/10.1177/S0038038500000316

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). SAGE. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452230153

Davis, K., Naughton, G. M., & Smith, K. (2009). The dynamics of Whiteness: Children locating within/without. In G. M. Naughton & K. Davis (Eds.), *'Race' and early childhood education* (pp. 49–65). Palgrave Macmillan.

Delamont, S. (2014). *Key themes in the ethnography of education*. SAGE.

Eisenhart, M. (2017). A matter of scale: Multi-scale ethnographic research on education in the United States. *Ethnography and Education*, *12*(2), 134–147. https://doi.org/10.1080/17457823.2016.1257947

Eisenhart, M. E. (2018). Changing conceptions of culture and ethnography in anthropology of education in the United States. In D. Beach, C. Bagley, & S. M. Da Silva (Eds.), *The Wiley handbook of ethnography of education*. John Wiley & Sons.

Elven, J., & Schwarz, J. (2016). Practice-theoretical foundations of organizational pedagogy. In M. Göhlich, A. Schröer, & S. M. Weber (Eds.), *Handbook of organizational pedagogy* (pp. 249–260). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-07512-5_18

Grootenboer, P., Edwards-Groves, C., & Choy, S. (Eds.). (2017). *Practice theory perspectives on pedagogy and education*. Springer.
Huf, C., & Kluge, M. (2021). Being (with) batman—entangled research relations in ethnographic research in early childhood education and care. *Ethnography and Education*, *16*(3), 248–262. https://doi.org/10.1080/17457823.2021.1903961
Knorr-Cetina, K., Schatzki, T. R., & von Savigny, E. (2001). *The practice turn in contemporary theory*. Routledge.
Lynch, J., Rowlands, J., Gale, T., & Skourdoumbis, A. (Eds.). (2018). *Practice theory and education. Diffractive readings in professional practice*. Routledge.
Reckwitz, A. (2008). Practices and discourses. A social theoretical and methodological relation. In H. Kalthoff (Ed.), *Theoretical empiricism. On the relevance of qualitative research* (pp. 188–209). Suhrkamp.
Rißler, G., Budde, J., & Schatzki, T. R. (2023). Inclusion, exclusion, and the spaces of practices. In G. Rißler, T. Buchner, & A. Köpfer (Eds.), *Space studies in inclusive education—Interdisciplinary relations* (pp. 71–90). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003313014-6
Rowlands, J., Gale, T., Parker, S., & Lynch, J. (2020). *Practice methodologies in education research*. Routledge.
Schäfer, H. (2013). *The instability of practice. Reproduction and transformation of the social in practice theory*. Velbrück Wiss.
Schatzki, T. R. (2002). *The site of the social*. Pennsylvania State University Press.
Schatzki, T. R. (2011). *Where the action is. On large social phenomena such as sociotechnical regimes* (Working Paper 1). www.sprg.ac.uk/uploads/schatzki-wp1.pdf
Schatzki, T. R. (2013). *The timespace of human activity*. Lexington Books.
Schatzki, T. R. (2016a). Keeping track of large phenomena. *gz*, *104*(1), 4–24. https://doi.org/10.25162/gz-2016-0001
Schatzki, T. R. (2016b). Practice theory as flat ontology. In G. Spaargaren, D. Weenink, & M. Lamers (Eds.), *Practice theory and research* (pp. 28–42). Taylor and Francis.
Schatzki, T. R. (2019). *Social change in a material world. How activity and material processes dynamize practices*. CRC Press.
Shove, E. (2023). *Connecting practices. Large topics in society and social theory*. Routledge.
Sieber Egger, A., & Unterweger, G. (2018). Ethnographic research in schools. Historical roots and developments with a focus on Germany and Switzerland. In D. Beach, C. Bagley, & S. M. da Silva (Eds.), *The Wiley handbook of ethnography of education* (pp. 233–256). Wiley.
Strauss, A. L. (2008). *Continual permutations of action*. Aldine Transaction.
Strauss, A. L., & Corbin, J. M. (Eds.). (1997). *Grounded theory in practice*. SAGE.
Strübing, J. (2018). Grounded theory: Methodological and methodological foundations. In C. Pentzold, A. Bischof, & N. Heise (Eds.), *Grounded theory practice* (pp. 27–52). Springer VS.

10 Addressing the Unseen, Challenging Visual Difference

New Perspectives in Ethnographic Research

Valérie Riepe and Anke Wischmann

Researching the Unseen and Unspoken in Education by Conducting Ethnography

Ethnographic research is mainly connected with methods and research techniques that serve to observe social practice or listen to actors in the field (Kwame Harrison, 2018). Hence, the subject—or even object—of ethnography in education and other fields is the perceivable and interrogatable. The fact that this is not a given has been problematised in particular when considering inequalities (Mikkonen et al., 2017), differences (Lewellen et al., 2021) or the other (Traustadóttir, 2001).

Early ethnographic research proclaimed its ability to assume an objective or neutral position so as to observe 'what is going on' (e.g., Mead, 2017). The subjects/objects of observation were usually addressed as being alien or (culturally) different from the researcher, who was perceived as normal/universal, but actually was Western, white and 'civilised'. Furthermore, it was assumed that the observer—as normal and neutral—was able to understand the practices but also the social structures (Malinowski, 1922/1960) correctly or even better than the—often indigenous—observed people. This perspective has been broadly criticised (Wellgraf, 2020). Recent ethnographic research therefore considers the obligation to reflect on global, postcolonial but also social power relations and resulting inequalities within research situations and relationships. Furthermore, the focus today does not lie on perceived alien others but on 'the alien within the familiar'. Thus, ethnographers tend to observe what is actually perceived as known or familiar and *make it alien* (Hirschauer & Amann, 1997; Hirschauer, 2007) so as to see and hear things differently—and to become open to new and unexpected insights. Nevertheless, this perspective also contains biases that frame the research perspective at all stages: Starting with epistemological and theoretical approaches, continuing with methodological designs and tools (including the language used) and relating to the question if and how participants are informed and involved, how the data are analysed and result in the forms and accessibility of research outcomes.

Hence, there is always an issue of reification of existing and persisting power structures, *even* if the research is (self)reflexive (Bourdieu & Wacquant,

DOI: 10.4324/9781032629384-13

This chapter has been made available under a (CC-BY-NC-ND) 4.0 license.

2008) and critical (Lave & Gibson, 2011). Reification means that despite the proclaimed aim to not reproduce social order in and by doing research, it still happens. This inherent ambivalence or paradox of social research cannot be eliminated, yet it must be taken into account, not least because it produces the unseen and unspoken within research.

Furthermore, the question of whether all (research) subjects are able to speak and be heard at all has been posed prominently (Spivak, 2015). If we assume that perception is prestructured by language and habitus, we have to accept that some elements—voices, utterances, appearances, things and practices—cannot be perceived from particular points of view. This includes aspects of positionality (Powell, 2022) on different levels: first, the social positioning of the researcher due to their socialisation and status and second the actual specific positioning of the researcher—or the technical equipment such as cameras or audio recorders—in the research situation.

Considering the bodily presence of subjects in ethnographic research, it is often assumed that the materiality of it offers visibility (Seymour, 2007). However, the appearance of bodies in research settings is also affected by the perspective taken, and the special order and choreography of the situation also (within a particular social and/or institutional setting) determine what can be seen by whom and how bodies are presented by whom (Dietrich & Riepe, 2022; Riepe, 2021). Hence, the specific order needs to be taken into account when reflecting on the unseen and the unspoken in educational ethnographic research.

An example of this might be the consideration of the room height in a (class) room. To date, mostly the dimensions of the width (right/left) and depth (front/back) axes of a room have been considered in educational research, but as Riepe (2021) showed, a closer—and shifted—look at the movement in and bodily choreography of a situation can supplement the latter with the dimensions of the (power) axes *above* and *below* (see Figure 10.1). The regulation of

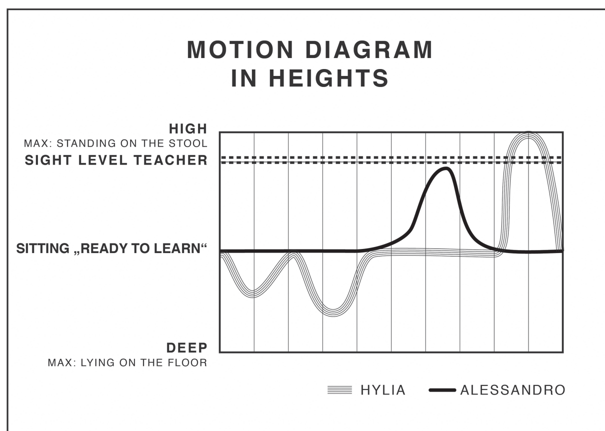

Figure 10.1 Motion diagram in heights (Dietrich & Riepe, 2022, p. 452; Riepe, 2021, p. 133).

heights in the classroom here reveals a choreography that defines 'permitted' and 'prohibited' levels: on a physical level, referring to a hierarchical level in the social order of the situation.

This critical reflection is one of the crucial challenges of any ethnographic research when taking power relations and social differences into account (Leaney & Webb, 2021). Hence, our aim is not to find the new as a research objective but to find new paths to theorise and methodologise ethnographic research.

Introducing New Perspectives to See and Perceive Differently

The new is a relative phenomenon that depends above all on the respective level of knowledge of a social location or the world. Since the subject of this volume is to explore what is new and is perceived as new in educational ethnographic research, we need to define the notion of newness in relation to the unseen and unspoken.

'What is the new? And how does it have to be constructed so that the new be perceived as new?' (Meier-Sternberg, 2024. Is it something that has not been seen so far that has not yet been heard? We argue that this is the case, but not because we do not discover something that has been there objectively before; hence, we only need to have a closer look or be more attentive and that the unseen and the unspoken can only appear if we change perspectives and modes of perception.

The new is relational as stated by various theorists, such as structuralists (Levi-Strauss, 2021; Oevermann, 2014), phenomenologists (Waldenfels, 2011), critical theorists or scholars, who reflect on the logic of science and emergence (Burks, 1946; Kuhn & Hacking, 2012). Whether the new is described as being radical and unavailable, or rather somewhat predictable and controllable via research and logical methods, varies between the differing approaches.

According to feminist (Haraway, 1988) and postcolonial (Gutiérrez Rodríguez, 2006) theories, we emphasise the notion of positionality in qualitative, and especially ethnographic, research. The researcher's position prestructures the gaze on the research subjects and objects and coconstructs the research field and space. This is not an abstract reflection but refers to the very concrete, specific and materialistic setting of inquiry at every stage: beginning with the construction of its objective manifesting in the data collection, continuing in the process of data analysis and ending with the publication of results.

Construction of the Objective

In accordance with both the researchers' academic and personal socialisation *and* the theoretical, methodological and methodical framework chosen, the research objective is constructed in a particular way (i.e., Mboti, 2012). The basic assumption here is that reality is a social construct, and therefore, there is no essential and objective research item to be referred to. Thus, it has to be argued and reflected upon how and why a specific research approach is applied.

Data Collection

When entering the field, the researcher affects and shapes the data being collected (i.e., Williams, 2020). They start by contacting particular gatekeepers and asking administrations (e.g., school ministries) for access: They might channel who and which institutions are part of the sample and also those excluded. By entering the research field (e.g., a school or classroom), the researcher affects the social space and becomes part of it, no matter how passive they might act. When conducting interviews, the impact of the researcher is obvious as they are part of the social interaction and costructure it. Furthermore, as an observer, the researcher interacts within the social context and hence influences it. Furthermore, the technical equipment, such as audio recorders or cameras, placed and functioning in certain ways structure what is actually conducted and therefore heard and seen on the recording (e.g., where is the recorder placed and who is being recorded? What is understandable and can be transcribed? Who is transcribing? Where is the focus of the camera? What is the lighting situation and has it been considered at all? Are there 'blind spots'? etc.). Hence, what is actually recorded and objectified in which way as audio, films or transcriptions, such as research protocols or written reports, is always a selection of what happened in the field.

On a side note, we might argue that the whole process of visual data collection and *creation* in the field of educational ethnographic research is not sufficiently reflected upon critically. Not as critically as other data collection methods in the field, or not critically at all when this involves the (de)construction of the 'white gaze' (Morrison, 1992) in the creation of visual material concerning light, for example—which a look at the history of art and media studies could already teach us in a much more differentiated way (e.g., Thompson, 2006, 2009; Sions & Wolfgang, 2021).

Data Analysis

Similarly to the choice of theories and data acquisition strategies, the particular methods used and the actors using them affect the results and the possibilities or limitations of emergence within the research process. The relationships between researchers, theories, methods and objectives or research subjects are dynamic and dialectic. Therefore, it is highly relevant which method is applied for the analysis because it produces perceptibility (e.g., a reconstructive procedure emphasising processes and a categorial approach content abstraction). Furthermore, it has to be considered who is involved in the analysis and how the persons are positioned and related to each other, for example, in terms of social differences, but also to (institutionalised) power structures. Is the research participatory so that the subjects of the research are involved? The more heterogeneous and interactive the analysis is, the greater reflexivity is achievable.

Publication

The traditional modes of academic publication affect what is perceived by both the scientific community and the public. Usually, we (i.e., us authors as members of the academia being subjected to the required forms of publication) publish papers in highly differentiated scholarly and disciplinary journals or with corresponding book publishers in a language that is difficult to understand for nonacademic readers. Moreover, the most important aspect for us in this chapter is the fact that we present our research almost exclusively in written or spoken text. Pictures, films and other modes of social utterances that are often related to bodily practices and sensual experiences need to be translated or transformed into static text to meet the requirements of recognised scientific practice—whereby the visual material is typically treated as an add-on instead of being an integrated part of the whole (e.g., Powels, 2005; Miko, 2013).

Thus, at all stages of the research process, specific biases of the researcher and the research context occur and define what can be seen and heard. By adhering to traditional research procedures, we as researchers potentially prevent the emergence of new insights, rather than make them possible. In order to find something new, we need to open up and change our position, perspective, perception and tools. For us, new aspects would be those that have not yet been addressed. Not because they are not there but because they are ineffable, that is, untransferable into speech. They are potentially perceptible, but not via established forms of data collection and processing. As a deeply rooted part of the understanding of ethnographic practice, the inevitability of the 'unseen' in all the simultaneity and subjectivity in the field is assumed as always being included—despite the field's aim for and work on comprehensiveness and objectivity (Clifford & Marcus, 1986).

Reframing Perception in Educational Ethnographic Research

As already mentioned, the transformation from visual material into static text appears as an integral part of recognised research practices across most academic disciplines. However, not only image–theoretical reflections have long questioned this approach:

> Vision is as important as language in mediating social relations, and it is not reducible to language, to the 'sign', or to discourse. Pictures want equal rights with language, not to be turned into language.
>
> (Mitchell, 1996, p. 82)

Thus, the process of generating visual material and the process of image perception could be reflected upon much more intensively in ethnographic research. For example, questions of what visual image is provided to the mind and how the 'puzzle of seeing' (Pylyshyn, 2003) unfolds seem to be completely absent in this context, even though the research paradigm of ethnographic inquiry is itself based on the practice of observation—and refers to all forms of sensory

perception. This is a further reason why our contribution aims to challenge the repetitive use of the same methods to address the 'unseen' in ethnographic research by now focusing on the process of perception, visual difference and the 'unspeakable' in the transmission of visual material. Even within a highly simplified breakdown of the process of the perception of visual material, it is necessary to differentiate between the concepts of perception and seeing. Perception is understood as the reception, organisation and processing of information. Moreover, perception is usually structured via a three-stage process with differentiating terms: pure vision (visual information intake as a pattern of light meeting the eyes), concept formation (cognitive representation, seeing something as something) and interpretation (transformation from visual to verbal). The first and second stages of this perceptual process (recognising and thinking as an 'internal perception') correspond to seeing. Here, seeing, as opposed to perceiving, is what is seen, what is cognitively represented, but not yet communicated. What is verbalised and thus communicated would correspond to the third level of perception (Bachleitner & Weichbold, 2015). Within this system, the problem of visual difference (Bachleitner & Weichbold, 2015, p. 27 ff.) is encountered in two places at once:

As a Difference Between an Image and Its Transformation into Words

Problematising the distinction between what is perceived and the verbal translation derived from it: This process, which involves a nonreducibility of perceptible phenomena to a linguistic level, is also called 'iconic difference' in art studies (Boehm & Mitchell, 2009).

As a Difference Between Presentational and Discursive Aspects of Image Symbolism

Concerning the process of symbol formation (Langer, 2009): Verbal symbolism is considered discursive because ideas can be communicated through words using specific vocabulary and syntax. Presentational symbolism, on the other hand, can be accessed visually (e.g., light and shadow effects) and is more varied than linguistic information. It is also called 'wordless' symbolism as a symbolic function becomes accessible that cannot fall back on regulated sign systems like language but is referred to as the sign qualities of concrete representation. This nondiscursive symbolism expresses meaning through the relationship between sensual entities that 'present' themselves as symbols.

Verbal symbolism and presentational symbolism can present themselves simultaneously. The distinction between the two now leads to those differences that cocondition visual difference: Something is articulated that eludes language and thus creates a second symbolic order.

As visual difference is considered to be an inevitable problem and a matter of reflection in its own right within the process of perception (Bachleitner

& Weichbold, 2015), it should be part of methodological reflection in ethnographic research: by questioning the apparent equation of pure vision and perception and by recognising the momentum of 'translation' in the reflection of the process of visual data collection and analysis. Furthermore, visual difference can inspire visual research material (at least partially) to be visually processed, and neither exclusively translated to a linguistic level nor reduced to its symbolic articulation—but to become committed to the attempt at making the 'unspeakable' experienceable, to challenge the '*equal rights with language*' of the visual as mentioned.

New Visualisations: Empirical Explorations of an Academic Setting

Challenging the methods of ethnographic data collection is exactly what we wanted to enable and genuinely try to achieve during the preparation and implementation of the '7th. Educational Ethnography Conference 2022: What's New?!' at the Europa-Universität Flensburg, Germany, with the cooperation of MA students from the Faculty of Education at the Europa Universität Flensburg and BA students from the Faculty of Art & Design at the University of Europe for Applied Sciences, Hamburg. The goal was to jointly develop (visual) conference documentation that regarded itself as an ethnographic inquiry and as part of an ethnographic collage (Friebertshäuser & Richter, 2012). In this way, the very subject of the research should already encourage a change in perspective: by observing the observers. By observing the professional practice of those people who otherwise speak about their observations within that practice.

Thus for the preparations, some theoretical basics and practical exercises were conducted with the students—for example, to reflect upon and experience the differentiation between pure vision and perception and moments of visual difference (see Figures 10.2 and 10.3)—so as to encourage openness and challenge the possibilities of research perspectives, methods and mediums.[1]

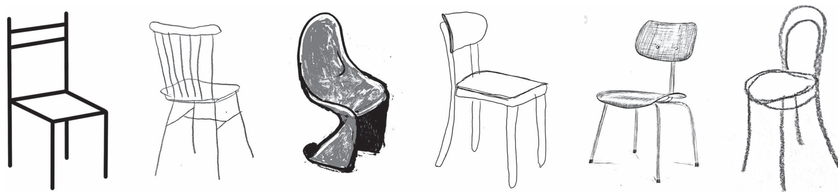

Figure 10.2 Practical exercise on the ambiguity of 'mental images' as the referent of words: We're talking about the same thing—aren't we?

Source: Photograph by the authors

Figure 10.3 Practical exercise on visual difference: Group 1 is shown a photograph and given the task of describing it in a few sentences. Group 2 draws a sketch based on the description by group 1 without ever having seen the photograph.

Source: Photograph by the authors

The concept for the conference was then to enter the field in a visually explorative way and to encounter it from a 'new' perspective. By choosing a medium, each student would produce visual field notes to transform the principles of written ethnography (van Maanen, 2011) into a visual one. After the data collection, the data would then be transferred into experimental visual observation protocols, intended as layers of artistic and technical processing that could be collected and documented as such. All this was undertaken during the conference in order to visualise it for all participants at the end of the event. The aim of presenting the material was, on the one hand, to emphasise the possibilities of multiperspective simultaneity of visual material and, on the other hand, to make the seemingly abstract ideas and media used at the event more comprehensible (Figure 10.4).

Thus, on the first day of the conference, the art and design students (majoring in illustration, film and motion design, communication design and photography) entered the lecture hall before the other participants and set up

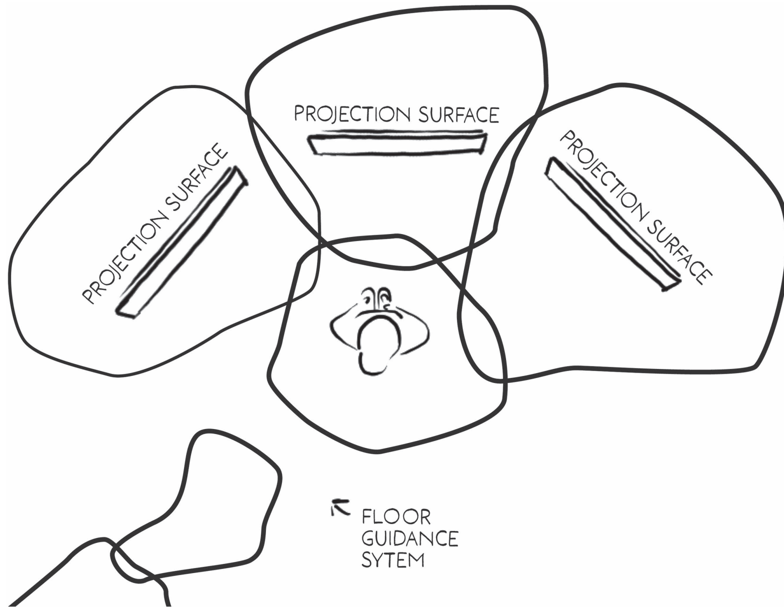

Figure 10.4 Concept for the exhibition space at the location.

Source: Photograph by the authors

their (technical) equipment. Some students sat under or on top of tables with extended two-meter-high tripods, others prepared several cameras across the room or were equipped with large drawing pads. Apparently, this type of setup would interfere with the 'regular' practices within this space and would not blend in easily at all (see Figure 10.5), and hence would explicitly disturb and influence the setting—contrary to the principles of participant observation. However, we wanted to view these—usually preventable—effects as an opportunity: to take advantage of the privilege of the possibilities provided by this specific 'newness searching' setting and *not* to give these aspects the power to prohibit our attempting this from the beginning.

This gave us visual perspectives on movements in and through the room by, for example, bird's eye shots from a 360° view, animated seat occupancy graphics, photographic long-time exposures or stop-motion observations. Other students focused on the *things* of and at the conference, requesting photographic glimpses into pants pockets or briefcases, or concentrating on videographic, photographic and illustrated observations. Others yet again tried to capture all kinds of bodily gestures, from silhouettes to the feet under the tables, or notations of arm movements through lines and forms theoretically inspired from dance.

Figure 10.5 View of a section of the setup at the event.
Source: Photograph by the authors

The analysis of and reflection on the material led to many further methodical and methodological questions and less so to concrete answers. Some of these questions had already been raised, for example, what is the purpose of publishing in the scientific community and which structures benefit from it? Can publishing practices and the way they are changing in the course of digitisation be read as a dialectical relationship in order to weigh the benefits and exploitation of common publishing practices? (Rummler, 2020). Yet many other questions were not addressed. However, the data themselves have such strong persuasive potential that we absolutely intend to continue on this uncertain path and encourage others to do so likewise.

The potential of these data cannot be presented here in this book format—with a maximum of 20 graphics permitted in the complete volume. Static words cannot reflect the effect that the perception of the occupancy movements in the room, for example, is capable of generating. It is not able to fully transport the sensual expression of the moving, visual material. After all, it might require an entire page (Figure 10.6)—without further explanatory words—so as to be able to convey at least an idea of what could be possible or considered further. Also so as to encourage the reader to change perspective—at least once physically in relation to this book.

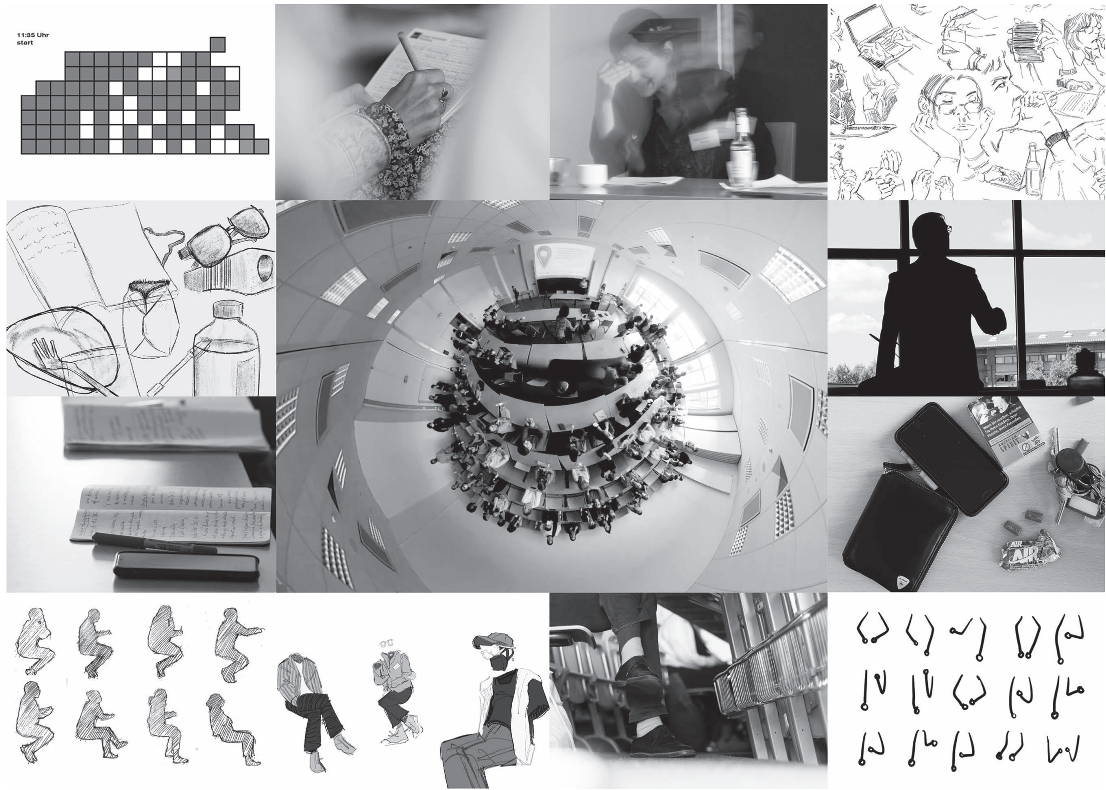

Figure 10.6 Excerpts from the visual (moving) material.

Source: Photograph by the authors

Questions—Outlooks—Signposts

As we can see, shifting the perspective becomes quite a concrete, specific, and bodily aspect of ethnographic research once it is reflected as a major issue here. What we see and what we consider to be part of research is crucial and lets us gain new insights and understandings of social and hence educational encounters. The 'university' space that was used as an experimental research arena for us is obviously a privileged space but also a highly hierarchically organised institution, with more or less formalised and thus expectable (see Goffman, 1983) interactive orders. Hence, power is—as always—an issue, but in a particular way that affects the manner in which bodies are present(ed), who speaks, who is heard, who is visible—or is even hypervisible and omnipresent. Thus, what we see anew is not only the bodies and what people do but also social interaction and power structures related to this very space and its order. Considering the variety of material that was produced in the course of observation of the conference, we argue for

1. new ways of composing the data
2. new ways of drawing results,
3. new ways of presenting them.

When writing this chapter, we actually experienced the limits of academic writing in relation to the kind of data with which we are working. We decided not to try to 'translate' it into text, but to address the limits, translation difficulties and gaps in the format. None of our visual, experimental steps can be fully presented here. But these limitations can be met creatively—with, for example, QR codes in book formats, or via digital access to ethnographic collages that do not exclusively use the written form, but include visual (moving) material as well as, for example, audio. Of course, this raises many questions, including data protection and technical aspects but is that enough of an argument to generally exclude these options and not explore their potential for research?

If we characterise research as a 'searching movement' that shifts between the border of knowing and not knowing, the basic issue is that one does not know exactly what one does not know (Rheinberger, 2005)—or what one does not see and perceive. In a nutshell, this clearly captures the essence of research. What is new is, by definition, unpredictable, so it can only be brought about to a limited extent. The new has to happen—and conditions have to be created for it to occur.

Note

1 Contributing students: Huldah Amo, Sarah Bruse, Elisa Frevert, Paula Härtel, Vincent Hilger, Finn Grzybienski, Jody Jahn, Kim Kebernik, Annelie Kebschull, Timon Kersten, Leo Klose-Degenhardt, Mika Koschyk, Clara Kreuzkamp, Florian Lange, Darya Nikolayenko, Sophie Notbom, Lesander Scharlaug, Balthasar Volpe, Ann-Kathrin Werner, Nicklas Witt, Wei Xiong.

References

Bachleitner, R., & Weichbold, M. (2015). Concerning the foundations of visual sociology: Perception and seeing, observing, and gazing. *Forum Qualitative Social Research*, *16*(2). https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-16.2.2141

Boehm, G., & Mitchell, W. J. T. (2009). Pictorial versus iconic turn: Two letters. *Culture, Theory and Critique*, *50*(2–3), 103–121. https://doi.org/10.1080/14735780903240075

Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. (2008). *An invitation to reflexive sociology* (7th ed.). University of Chicago Press.

Burks, A. W. (1946). Peirce's theory of abduction. *Philosophy of Science*, *13*(4), 301–306. https://doi.org/10.1086/286904

Clifford, J., & Marcus, G. E. (Eds.). (1986). *Writing culture: The poetics and politics of ethnography*. University of California Press.

Dietrich, C., & Riepe, V. (2022). Social choreographies in primary school education. In A. Kraus & C. Wulff (Eds.), *The Palgrave handbook of embodiment and learning* (pp. 437–456). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-93001-1_27

Friebertshäuser, B., & Richter, S. (2012). Der schulische Trainingsraum—Ethnographische Collage als empirische, theoretische und methodologische Herausforderung. In B. Friebertshäuser, H. Kelle, H. Boller, S. Bollig, C. Huf, & A. Langer (Eds.), *Feld und Theorie* (pp. 71–88). Barbara Budrich.

Goffman, E. (1983). The interaction order: American Sociological Association. *American Sociological Review*, *48*(1), 1–17.

Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges. *Feminist Studies*, *14*(3), 575–599. https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066

Harrison, K. A. (2018). *Ethnography. Understanding qualitative research*. Oxford University Press.

Hirschauer, S. (2007). Puttings things into words. Ethnographic description and the silence of the social. *Human Studies*, *29*(4), 413–441. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10746-007-9041-1

Hirschauer, S., & Amann, K. (1997). *Die Befremdung der eigenen Kultur*. Suhrkamp.

Kuhn, T. S., & Hacking, I. (2012). *Structure of scientific revolutions* (50th ed.). University of Chicago Press.

Langer, S. K. (2009). *Philosophy in a new key: A study in the symbolism of reason, rite, and art*. Harvard University Press.

Lave, J., & Gibson, T. P. (2011). *Apprenticeship in critical ethnographic practice*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226470733.001.0001

Leaney, S., & Webb, R. (2021). Representation as politics: Asserting a feminist ethic in ethnographic research. *Ethnography and Education*, *16*(1), 44–59. https://doi.org/10.1080/17457823.2020.1722952

Levi-Strauss, C. (2021). *Wild thought: A new translation of 'La pensee sauvage'*. University of Chicago Press.

Lewellen, C., Bohonos, J., Henderson, E., & Colón, G. (2021). Re-complicating intersectionality considering differences in language and personality type when considering strategies for African American women's career development. In Information R Management Association (Eds.), *Research anthology on challenges for women in leadership roles* (pp. 418–437). Hershey. https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-8592-4.ch024

Malinowski, B. (1960). *Argonauts of the Western pacific*. Routledge. (Original work published 1922)

Margolis, E. (2014). *The SAGE handbook of visual research methods*. SAGE. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446268278

Mboti, N. (2012). Research, method and position. 'What are we doing?' In K. G. Tomaselli (Ed.), *Cultural tourism and identity: Rethinking indigeneity* (pp. 53–70). Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004234581_005
Mead, M. (2017). *Cooperation and competition among primitive peoples.* Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351320009
Meier-Sternberg, M. (2024). Das Neue in der Schulethnographie. In J. Budde, M. Meier-Sternberg, G. Rißler, & A. Wischmann (Eds.), *What's new? Neue Perspektiven in ethnographischer Erziehungswissenschaft* (pp. 85–99). Barbara Budrich.
Mikkonen, E., Laitinen, M., & Hill, C. (2017). Hierarchies of knowledge: Analyzing inequalities within the social work ethnographic research process as ethical notions in knowledge production. *Qualitative Social Work*, *16*(4), 515–532. https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325016629542
Miko, K. (2013). Visuelles 'nosing around': Zur theoretischen Fundierung visualisierter Wissenschaftskommunikation. *Soziale Welt*, *64*(1/2), pp. 153–170. www.jstor.org/stable/24754656
Mirzoeff, N. (1999). *An introduction to visual culture*. Routledge.
Mitchell, W. J. T. (1996). What do pictures 'really' want? *October*, *77*, 71–82. https://doi.org/10.2307/778960
Morrison, T. (1992). *Playing in the dark: Whiteness and the literary imagination*. Vintage Books.
Oevermann, U. (2014). Sozialisationsprozesse als Dynamik der Strukturgesetzlichkeit der ödipalen Triade und als Prozesse der Erzeugung des Neuen durch Krisenbewältigung. In D. Garz & B. Zizek (Eds.), *Wie wir zu dem werden, was wir sind*. Springer VS (pp. 15–69). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-03539-6_2
Pollard, E. B. (1986). *Visual arts research: A handbook*. Greenwood Press.
Powell, D. (2022). Critical ethnography in schools: Reflections on power, positionality, and privilege. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *35*(1), 18–31. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2021.1888160
Powels, L. (2005). *Visual cultures of science: Rethinking representational practices in knowledge building and science communication*. Dartmouth College Press. https://doi.org/10.1163/182539107X01085
Pylyshyn, Z. W. (2003). *Seeing and visualizing: It's not what you think*. MIT Press. https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/6137.001.0001
Rheinberger, H. J. (2005). Nichtverstehen und Forschen. In J. Albrecht (Ed.), *Kultur Nicht Verstehen* (pp. 75–81). Edition Voldemeer. https://doi.org/10.1007/b139004
Riepe, V. (2021). *Choreographien der Homogenisierung: Zur Verkörperung von Gleichheiten in der Grundschule*. transcript Verlag.
Rodríguez, G. E. (2006). *On post-colonial conjunctures and transversal understanding translating positionality.* https://transversal.at/transversal/0606/gutierrez-rodriguez/en
Rummler, K. (2020). Die Dialektik des Publizierens in der akademischen Kulturindustrie im Zeitalter der Digitalisierung. In V. Dander, P. Bettinger, E. Ferraro, C. Leineweber, & K. Rummler (Eds.), *Digitalisierung—Subjekt—Bildung: Kritische Betrachtungen der digitalen Transformation* (pp. 251–272). Barbara Budrich. https://zenodo.org/record/4436705
Seymour, W. (2007). Exhuming the body: Revisiting the role of the visible body in ethnographic research. *Qualitative Health Research*, *17*(9), 1188–1197. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732307308517
Sions, H. K., & Wolfgang, C. N. (2021). Looking back, looking forward: Resisting the white gaze in historical narratives and future possibilities of art education. *Journal of Social Theory in Art Education*, *41*(1), 7. https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/jstae/vol41/iss1/7/

Spivak, G. C. (2015). Can the subaltern speak? In P. Williams (Ed.), *Colonial discourse and post-colonial theory* (pp. 66–111). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315656496-6

Thompson, K. A. (2006). *An eye for the tropics: Tourism, photography, and framing the Caribbean picturesque*. Duke University Press.

Thompson, K. A. (2009). The sound of light: Reflections on art history in the visual culture of hip-hop. *The Art Bulletin*, *91*(4), 481–505. https://doi.org/10.1080/00043079.2009.10786149

Traustadóttir, R. (2001). Research with others: Reflections on representation, difference and othering. *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, *3*(2), 9–28. https://doi.org/10.1080/15017410109510773

van Maanen, J. (2011). *Tales of the field. On writing ethnography* (2nd ed.). University of Chicago Press.

Waldenfels, B. (2011). *Phenomenology of the alien: Basic concepts*. Northwestern University Press. https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=1987072

Wellgraf, S. (2020). After exoticism. *Journal for European Ethnology and Cultural Analysis*, *5*(1), 5–23.

Williams, K. (2020). Playing the fields: Theorizing research impact and its assessment. *Research Evaluation*, *29*(2), 191–202. https://doi.org/10.1093/reseval/rvaa001

11 Elaborating New Insights in Transnational Ethnographic Collaborations

Opportunities and Challenges

Magnus Frank, Anja Sieber Egger, Gisela Unterweger, Florian Weitkämper, Clemens Wieser and Susan Wright

Introduction[1]

This chapter adopts a methodological perspective and focuses on processes of ethnographic knowledge production, in particular on the creation of new insights in transnational collaborative project contexts. Although the practice of ethnography can be understood as being collaborative *per se* (Lassiter, 2005), further methodological and practical research questions arise regarding the social, linguistic, spatial and indeed national situatedness of ethnographic research. This situatedness poses questions such as about the specific possibilities and limits of the ethnographic strategy to make fields and data strange (Delamont, 2010). In our contribution, we explore the innovative potentials of transnational collaborative formats that reach beyond individual project setups (Lahelma et al., 2014), beyond the expertise of individual researchers and also beyond national borders (Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). The strategy of bringing together different disciplinary, theoretical and methodological or regional traditions but also different institutional locations, as well as different mostly nationally oriented project conceptions, hold specific opportunities: A transnationally and collaboratively designed project concurs with the potential to establish connections between fields that would not have been noticed if they had been considered in isolation. In line with 'multi-scale ethnography', transnational collaborative ethnographies in this respect meet the need to explore cultural forms that extend beyond single sites (Eisenhart, 2017). At the same time, they expand spaces for estranging ethnographic data and for productive irritations of a 'hard' notion of the data and the field.

The contribution presents the reflection on experiences from two collaborative project contexts, as well as methodological considerations developed from a commentary on the previous two contributions. The chapter specifically asks how collaborative efforts can be used to reexplore ethnographic material already collected but frequently not yet interpreted, potentially expanding it into larger contexts and towards the development of new knowledge. In part 1, Susan Wright discusses the challenges faced by a 'multi-sited' study that

DOI: 10.4324/9781032629384-14

This chapter has been made available under a (CC-BY-NC-ND) 4.0 license.

spanned several national contexts and engaged with a range of disciplinary approaches to ethnography. The project was based on the EU's Initial Training Network (ITN) project 'Universities in the Knowledge Economy'. In part 2, Magnus Frank and Florian Weitkämper examine the production of the *new* through transnational collaboration in the 'Spaces and Places of Organised Childhood (SPoC)' network. By outlining the practices of the network, it becomes evident that the transnationality of the network, as well as its specific collaborative character create a field of tension between the poles of productive uncertainty and uncertain productivity. In part 3, Clemens Wieser sheds light on more general methodological questions related to collaborative ethnography in transnational settings. This part is based on a commentary on the previous two contributions.

We have identified three overarching aspects that both collaborative projects and the methodological reflections have in common. The first one can be outlined as the basic *challenge of sharing knowledge in complex transnational collaborations.* In both cases, the process of sharing knowledge evolves in the context of different local, national, methodological and/or theoretical communities of practice. The recognition of the sheer complexities of these contexts and of the challenges when attempting to place them in relation to each other represents one crucial step. Both collaborative projects coin terms around the phenomenon of being embedded in and thus having to navigate these complexities. Wright talks about a 'multi-everything ethnography' and outlines the precursors and collaborative steps which were necessary so as to be able to start sharing knowledge in the first place. Frank and Weitkämper do the same in the much smaller and probably more manageable context of the SPoC collaboration when they describe the process of 'grooving in'. In his comment on this aspect, Wieser also broaches the idea of complexity in the form of multiple and different ways of producing ethnographic knowledge. He states that this complexity tends to be aligned within local research communities, but may become an issue in collaborations on an international level.

A second aspect can be described as the *necessity for collective conceptualisations and understandings.* Regarding this aspect, Wright stresses the importance of carefully establishing a new overarching community of practice within a collaborative project, also by constantly encouraging a practice of continuous reflection of one's own positionings. Frank and Weitkämper continue their musical metaphors with the term 'jamming', thus outlining the predominantly improvisational process of an ongoing cross-project translation. Wieser reflects on how these collective processes of necessity include the need to deal with difference and uncertainty, the feeling of being lost and the importance of constantly gaining new orientation, but also the need to make implicit knowledge explicit.

A third aspect concerns the *creation of new knowledge*, to which all three sections of the chapter again refer. Within their project, Wright describes the goal of drafting alternative university futures, which could be achieved using a 'search conference' method based on the collaborative work in prior years.

Frank and Weitkämper see the 'creation of the new' through a process they call 'fixing', which they see as a potential result of the practices of translating and changing perspectives. Finally, Wieser takes up the metaphor of the bricolage as a (preliminary) result of all the previous processes of re- and deconstruction. By combining concrete project contexts and more general methodological considerations, our contribution itself aims to advance methodological reflection through the composition of the collaborative.

Multi-Everything Ethnography[2]

The EU's Marie Skłodowska-Curie Initial Training Network (ITN) projects are required to be not only multinational collaborations but multidisciplinary, multi-institutional and multisector. In addition, the four-year 'Universities in the Knowledge Economy' (UNIKE) project was multisited, with anthropological approaches to ethnography influencing the empirical design and conduct of the project throughout it. The project funded 11 PhD fellows and 3 postdocs, each with independent research projects, while 6 further affiliated PhD fellows participated in the programme overall. The fellows came from 14 countries and were located in five other European countries, mainly in departments of education, but with disciplinary focuses varying from philosophy to political economics. In addition to their supervisors, there were 30 associated partners in Europe and the Asia-Pacific region with specialist knowledge or interests in universities and knowledge organisations.

The aims of ITN projects are to develop new fields of research both through PhD projects and by training a cohort of future research leaders. This requires the fellows to conduct self-contained projects and to collaborate, so as to bring their individual research together in a collective understanding of the field, as well as of how to act in it as a cohort of leaders. This section reflects on the ways we created a framework within which fellows could develop sufficient mutual trust to collaborate in creating ethnographic knowledge.

Following an anthropological approach to the project design, the first step was to depict the research 'field' by plotting the 'knowledge-economy ecology' in which universities are located (Wright, 2016). Universities are surrounded by a plethora of different kinds of organisations that are seeking new relations with them, such as for-profit concerns, international agencies or special-interest and pressure groups. For half of the fellows, the project negotiated research access and placements with such research sites beyond the university setting—a publishing firm, a ranking organisation, two international agencies, a consultancy, two special interest groups and a pressure group—in order to research their relations with universities.

The projects for the other half of the fellows involved examining changes to the internal life of universities as they positioned themselves in this new global and competitive knowledge economy. Universities were meant to negotiate with and respond to the pressures and demands from these surrounding interests by installing strategic leadership, budget controlling through cost

centres and management through the measurement of abstracted definitions of performance. These fellows studied processes of marketisation, managing research performance, reconceptualising education, internationalisation, academic freedom and flagship reforms of doctoral education. This allocation of European research sites in strategic positions outside and inside universities was intended to give fellows a framework through which they could see how their individual projects contributed to a collective conceptualisation of the research field that locates universities in a knowledge–economy ecology. This was a crucial first step in developing a multisited collaboration.

A second step was to explore the global character of these moves to position universities in a knowledge economy. Each fellow's project also had a fieldwork site or an extended visit with a relevant organisation or expert in the Asia–Pacific rim. Some projects involved Europe–Asia collaborations, for instance, a study of partnership in the Sino–Danish Center, or EU-ASEAN dialogue about the Bologna Process. Others involved comparison, for example, between the European and Shanghai ranking systems, or work on academic freedom by the Magna Charta and the Association of Pacific Rim Universities.

The third step was to create the conditions for sharing knowledge. As the EU's aim for an ITN is not just to complete individual projects to the highest academic standards but to produce a 'networked group' of highly competent 'future research leaders', this accorded the project a future orientation: How could the fellows form a lasting network through which they could use their collective research knowledge and experience to shape the future of universities and other research institutions? Each semester, we held a week-long workshop that all the fellows and their supervisors attended. These were important occasions for fellows to gain a deep understanding of each other's work. Not only did groups of fellows organise each event around a specific topic but we devoted time to hearing about each other's research. We carefully developed a community of practice with a supportive ethos, spurring on each other to aspire to conduct the best research achievable through constructive critique, but always in a spirit of encouragement and collaboration. Each workshop also included a session in which the fellows shared reflective analyses of their positioning within their universities and in this knowledge–economy ecology. Introducing them to concepts such as 'politically reflexive practitioners' (Wright, 2004), the anthropology of policy (Shore & Wright, 1997) and institutional ethnography (Smith, 2005), we extended the practice of reflexivity that is essential to anthropological and ethnographic research and engaged in continuous reflection on how they were being positioned by systems, rules, unwritten conventions, expectations and hierarchies in their day-to-day organisational life. Where did they feel constrained by their university, their secondment organisation or the UNIKE project itself, how could they use their reflexive organisational analysis to find room for manoeuvre and negotiate changes that would enable them to flourish? How would they use this knowledge and experience to create conducive environments in organisations where they would work in the future—and support each other doing so?

By their third year, the fellows had developed sufficient knowledge of each other's research and ways of thinking and working that it became possible to explore how to collate insights from their individual projects, not only to critique some aspect of current developments but also to indicate alternative university futures. To structure this collaboration, we held a two-day 'search conference' as a method of connecting critiques for action. First, we all collaborated in creating a history of the university from which we identified current trends. Working in groups, we discussed the likely futures if these trends continued; and, in contrast, we envisaged our ideal futures. Finally, the question arose of how to shift the trajectory of universities from likely to desired futures. As a result of this methodology, groups of fellows formed around six issues: the global ordering of higher education; how internationalisation creates peripheries; processes of market-making; how to create open-ended, instead of marketised education; how to respond to gendered inequalities by conceptualising a university based on an ethics of care; and designs for a participatory university. In the final year of the project, the fellows worked collectively so as to bring the knowledge and experience from their individual projects together to bear on these six aspects of the future development of universities. The six groups organised the final conference with sessions to present their critiques of the issue and the implications for the future and to show how their research suggested potential alternatives. Each group had a budget permitting them to invite not only the project's academic and associated partners but also any other leading figure who would help develop their group's ideas. Following the success of the conference, we are now preparing a book to be published by Berghahn. Each group of fellows is responsible for their own section and for determining how to write together so as to bring their differing ethnographic and qualitative research into a dialogue with each other. Further contributions are being provided by leaders recruited in the field.

Each group developed their collaborative analysis in a different way. For example, to analyse market-making in universities, they identified how their differing ethnographic and qualitative studies provided a vignette of each of the sequential steps in the process—from imagining to framing, qualifying, instituting and subjectifying (Lewis et al., 2022). The group concerned with internationalisation gained critical leverage by looking at their individual PhD projects through the lens of the word 'periphery'. First, they looked from the perspective of peripheralised countries in the world and showed three ways they are trying to create a more balanced or equal relationship with universities in Europe and North America. Second, they explored how international students are peripheralised within their host university and country in Europe. They examined the dilemmas students encounter when trying to negotiate language politics or use social media in an attempt to participate more fully in the university and society (Alemu et al., 2022; Trifuljesko & Choi, 2022). A third group developed what they termed 'interpretive comparison' by showing ethnographically how the phrase 'academic freedom' moved across multiple sites and how, through a nomothetic fallacy, it was assumed to be a shared

academic value, yet worked quite differently in practice in each site. The group concerned with designing a participatory university drew upon ethnographic case studies of exemplary universities so as to distil a set of principles for a model university (Butcher, 2017; Wright & Greenwood, 2017). Each group developed their own methods for working collaboratively in line with their materials and their relations with each other. The shift from conference presentations to collaborative writing for publication purposes proved to be much harder and more time consuming than anticipated, but all the groups persisted in discussing and sharing drafts until they reached agreement. While early versions of some sections have already been published (as referenced earlier), the book will also elaborate the project's collaborative work, both intellectually and interpersonally. The intention is for it to develop more fully than indicated here, revealing how we brought a critical analysis to bear on shaping a future for universities where relations are not designed primarily to drive a putative global knowledge economy, but rather to offer the possibility of what Tsing (2015) calls 'collaborative survival' in a 'liveable landscape'.

Producing Something New in Transnational Ethnographic Collaboration?[3]

In the following section, we reflect on the work of a transnational ethnographic network, shedding light on producing *something new* within collaborative productions of knowledge. First, we present the emergence and development of the network, followed by a description of our three modes that characterise our collaborative work. These occur between *two poles*: 'uncertain productivity' and 'productive uncertainty'. Against this backdrop, we conclude with a focus on the question of whether the knowledge that arises is *new*.

Three Modes of Collaborative Work

The 'Spaces and Places of Organised Childhood (SPoC)' ethnographic network can be traced back to an initiative in 2016 by Swiss ethnographers, namely, Christoph Maeder, Anja Sieber Egger and Gisela Unterweger. They invited several international scholars to attend a workshop with the aim of establishing educational ethnography in early childhood education in Switzerland. Today the SPoC network includes 10 to 13 researchers from differing locations in Switzerland, Germany and Luxembourg.

The network's establishment points to the fact that *nationalised research landscapes* are still hegemonic, even though internationality is a hard currency in the social and career-related games of academia. Even against the background of globalisation or the European Higher Education Area launched in the context of the Bologna Process, collaboration across borders seems to be less of a necessity and more so a researcher or research group's individual decision. Transnational work has to be approached on its own first so as to recognise its advantages for the production of ethnographic knowledge. With

this in mind, the collaboration has arisen from a specific geographical (Western European), political (EU and Non-EU) and multilingual (mainly German and Swiss German) constellation. The network is transnational in crossing borders, yet it also draws specific new boundaries. This also affects the three modes that characterise the network's collaborative work.

'Grooving In'

The members of the network have varying disciplinary backgrounds and belong to different status groups: educators, cultural and social anthropologists, sociologists and social pedagogues—all in differing positions: professors, PhD candidates and junior researchers. However, all the participants share grounded knowledge and experience in *doing ethnography* and reconstructing ethnographic data. The shared data come from contrasting settings and are predominantly focused on pedagogical or peer interactions and represent different materialities. They include field protocols and notes, interviews, photographs, drawings or videos. The interests of the network's *individual actors* range from questions about the production of difference(s) and social inequality (Kuhn, 2013; Sieber Egger et al., 2021; Weitkämper, 2022), to religion (Frank, 2021), space (Maeder, 2018) or participation (Neumann et al., 2019). The multitude of differing current interests and projects are aligned with each other in an open discussion at the beginning of every meeting. Throughout its history of development, it seems that the SPoC's *training character* (Berli, 2019, p. 137) has not become a 'classical' variant of scientific association formats. Rather, the projects serve as an extension of the participants' individual ethnographic perspectives. In this way, the well-established interest in materiality in the network's projects on kindergarten practices has revealed a view of artefacts in other projects, such as the social meaning of sofas in religious education circles.

'Jamming'

The SPoC can be described as a collective and *cross-project translation* activity. It is not primarily focused on specific products, such as publications, conference papers or project proposals. Interpretational aspects mainly concentrate on what can be called 'organising surprises' (Breidenstein et al., 2020, p. 138). The SPoC is characterised by improvisation. One perspective advances to the foreground is replaced or expanded by another one, the group becomes involved in the process, turning—time consumingly—in circles, drawing outlines and developing patterns that are then rejected again. In this context, to 'jam' (Berli, 2019, p. 138) with each other means to be confronted with each other's normalities and certainties. The aim is to look through the lenses of other projects so as to develop theory beyond the individual projects' settings and institutions. In doing so, the diversity of theoretical lenses becomes an opportunity. For example, pedagogical formations of circles have emerged as a subject in one ethnographic study and have led more broadly to the attempt to broach 'pedagogical forms' across the different projects.

'Fixing'

Coordination and *fixation* (Berli, 2019, pp. 142–144) often tend to remain unfinished and require much time. One meaningful result of our collective interpreting practices was that the pedagogical form of the circle is framed by different social, idealistic and symbolic codes. This means that it produces a specific need for protection, even when a community of equals is imagined. Once it becomes established, its normativity turns into practical fragility. It is related to the question as to how to act as a circle's participant without undermining the idea of equality. This becomes a pedagogical issue that is mostly solved by outlining the sharp borders of the circle, the spaces inside and outside it. It became obvious that circle practices are related to disciplining, controlling and suspenseful expectations of how to deal with each other (Fritzsche et al., 2022).

Perspectivation of Newness?

With regard to the three modes of collaborative work, we would now like to contour the *newness* of ethnographic knowledge in terms of three processes.

Changing Perspectives

It is the uncertainty of the collaboration itself that *forces us* to address the different social, discursive, gender-related or stylistic framing of the data and the ethnographers. The collaborative discourse resembles a change of perspective, which indicates the contingency of positionality and situatedness (Haraway, 1988). We have observed the important social meaning of artefacts of everyday life, such as carpets or sofas, and how they become educationally relevant through the ethnographer's gaze. They inscribe themselves into the field protocols: The carpet is liked, or it is not noticed at all; one takes off one's shoes, walks and plays on it or runs around it; one imagines flying carpets, or reflexively elaborates on orientalist 'fantasies' (Tyrer, 2013) about Islam. The power of jamming lies in resisting the tempting processes of objectifying ethnographic field protocols as data. The well-established 'data-interpreting style' (Breidenstein, 2017, p. 13) splits the research process into two: data-producing researchers and analysing writers. In terms of our performance here, no sacred silence occurs around *the one* protocol, but rather a multivoiced discourse arises around many scenes whose similarity and dissimilarity are equally valid for discussion. To remain with this metaphor, the open discourse on our collaboration provides enough cement to fill any emerging cracks.

Translation

The change of perspective highlights not only the material within its specific nature but also the projects within their own logic. Thereby, the differences between research systems and interests in different national and discursive

settings are revealed. But our work also represents a decision against overly fast transnational comparisons or against agreement on what the *tertium comparationis* actually is. Moreover, we *translate* (Fritzsche, 2021) the various projects and their respective data into each other. This does not mean transforming the original aspects into a new shape, but rather initiating a confrontation of the self with the other. In this way, our collaboration develops into a thought-experimental variation of contexts and topics.

If we were to imagine the early childhood dance around the carpet in the rather motionless, coded living room of Muslim shared flats or vice versa, the immense significance of formations of corporeality, generation and community moves to the fore. The children would not sit but play on the sofas and the young Muslim adults would probably refuse to dance around the carpet, because serenity and seriousness have to be brought into balance with each other (Frank, 2021). With the variation of the context, our interests also become questionable: Why have we always been interested in observing motor skills in a kindergarten context, while in a religious one, the body has only come into focus through years of participation? The thought–experimental setting shows that the translation of fields and their logics fails in a narrower sense, yet precisely from this crisis newness appears as meaningful difference and includes the motive of *repositioning* knowledge. Knowledge about Islam, for example, is seen as a more or less secret 'special knowledge' or even knowledge about education of 'the others' (Geier & Frank, 2022). The collaboration provides an opportunity to normalise this symbolically by placing it within the context of the public education systems' practices that the other projects reconstruct. The open discourse in this sense appears as a struggle about the criteria of *adequacy* (Engel & Köngeter, 2014) in translation.

Creation

Both processes lead to the question of whether the knowledge produced is *new* in a strict or radical sense. The 'explorativity' of ethnography carries the promise of *newness* ahead of it like a monstrance. But a naturalistic understanding of 'finding' inherits problems concerning the 'inventiveness of practice' (Hirschauer, 2008) in various forms: in text positivism, in publications that exhibit culture like trophies in snappy titles or in a *ventriloquism* whose characteristic is to describe the newness of others via introspection.

Criticism of such an understanding has become established. Even the hermeneutic sociology of knowledge points out, 'The "discovery of the new" . . . can become, underhand, the "rediscovery of the old"' (Eberle, 2011, p. 21). The discovery thus *challenges* the loss of knowledge and certainty. Against this background, we argue that *newness* in our ethnographic collaborations emerges less from the 'empiricality of theory' (Hirschauer, 2008) and more from changing perspectives. Even though we still do not know exactly what we mean theoretically by *form*, our common interest in pedagogical forms lets us explore different spatial arrangements and media in which pedagogy is *brought into form*.

The Collaborative Production of Ethnographic Knowledge[4]

The production of ethnographic knowledge in Europe is driven by local, regional and international communities. Communities on each level provide shared beliefs and values about ethnography, and each community sets its horizon for producing ethnographic knowledge. The following section has been developed from a commentary on the previous two contributions and relates to both. It illustrates some differences in the production of ethnographic knowledge in local and international communities and explores two qualities that I find present when engaging in international collaboration in educational ethnography: (1) Sharing uncertainty and substantiating ethnographic writing and (2) exploring global assemblages and products of bricolage.

Differences in Local and International Ethnographic Communities

The local and international ethnographic communities that we engage with shape the way we produce ethnographic knowledge, encounter the field and verbalise silent social phenomena. On the local level, ethnographic knowledge production is often embedded in research groups that provide an aligned understanding of strategies for fieldwork and analysis, as well as a position with respect to their relation to established knowledge and traditions. Such an aligned understanding is often instilled by a senior researcher to establish conventions for knowledge production and set boundaries against other local methodological or theoretical positions (Beach & Larsson, 2022). Local research communities thus rely on a particular entanglement between ethnographic inquiry and established educational knowledge. However, ethnographic knowledge production also occurs independently of such power regimes. Indeed, many ethnographers start their careers in different ways, becoming interested in ethnography, even though there is no local ethnographic community. In many cases, they feel attracted to the beliefs and values that ethnography offers and regard these as being in line with their approach to educational research. Such researchers find their way into educational ethnography through international communities and conferences. In this way, they gain contact with multiple means of producing ethnographic knowledge and experience a culture of sharing and discussing ethnographic research. While participation in international ethnographic communities is limited, it also suspends local power regimes and reveals possibilities of doing ethnography. This enables researchers to critically analyse their present conditions in the sense that international communities provide spaces to identify norms of local communities and question prevailing practices of producing ethnographic knowledge. In both cases, ethnographic communities act as spaces of culture that, paraphrasing Ingold (2022), open the world up to the ethnographer in new ways.

This short sketch should suffice to demonstrate that the landscape within which ethnographic knowledge is produced is rather heterogeneous. Despite

this heterogeneity, some ethnographers highlight key characteristics of educational ethnography (Walford, 2018), or of what it is not (Ingold, 2021). At the same time, other ethnographers state that there is not—and never has been—a strong convention about such characteristics (Tummons & Beach, 2020). The latter position is aligned with historic analyses of ethnographic research that indicate significant changes in the values upon which ethnography is based, resulting in different 'styles of authority' and styles of writing about the field (Van Maanen, 2011). Across Europe, educational ethnographers employ a multitude of ways for producing ethnographic knowledge, from representational approaches to approaches that advocate ontological displacement (Sancho Gil & Hernández-Hernández, 2021). And indeed, a large international community of ethnographers agrees that 'being lost' is an important quality in the production of ethnographic knowledge (Smith & Delamont, 2019).

Apart from the differing perspectives involved, ethnographic knowledge is always produced through sensual experiences in a field. Such experiences often endorse some amount of getting lost in a field so as to make sense of the life of the people in it. This characteristic of ethnographic knowledge production leads to descriptive relativism, a philosophical position that acknowledges the plurality of social norms and values amongst groups, while at the same time claiming that norms and values are not mutually exclusive or incomprehensible. Norms and values in different fields thus are true or false only relative to the norms and values present in this same field. To the relativist ethnographer, fields consist of norm and value compounds, through which it becomes impossible to produce neutral descriptions and universal value judgements. To make sense of norms and values in a field, ethnographers need to participate in, listen to and observe practices of knowing in the field and transform participant observation into ethnographic knowledge through writing (Forsey, 2010), for which reason ethnographers have, for a long time, acknowledged the researcher as the 'main instrument' in ethnography (Walford, 2018). One way of exploring this main instrument is to consider the subjectivity of researchers and its dependency on technologies of the self and truth-telling (Ball, 2017), which establishes ways for participating, building rapport, observing and note-taking. For ethnography, subjectivity is a resource for making sense of what is going on in a field, expressing uncertainty and substantiating ethnographic writing.

Sharing Uncertainty and Substantiating Ethnographic Writing

Ethnographers rely on different beliefs and values, reflected in local ethnographic styles. While these differences in doing ethnography are usually unproblematic in local collaborations, they become more apparent when researchers enter an international community. When sharing analytic writing or conclusions in international communities, ethnographers are prompted to make some implicit practices explicit and comprehensible. At the same time,

making sense of other ethnographies in the international community requires some tolerance to difference (Wieser & Pilch Ortega, 2020), as ethnographies may employ a range of writing genres. Discussing these aspects, Katz (2019) argues that many ethnographies belong to one of the following three genres: (1) an iconic genre that creates images of some part of social life through showing central characters, (2) a comparative genre that focuses on situations and the identities that people enact within them, or (3) a modelling genre that attempts to show how a social world works. Choosing a specific genre entails personal commitments, making it practically impossible for a researcher to shift genre, at least during an ongoing project. Beyond genres, ethnographers also draw upon different analytical strategies, from grounded theory, the extended case method or fieldnote inscriptions through to videography. And even before becoming analytical, ethnographers often choose their approach towards reflexivity. While ethnography is praised for its openness to differing writing styles, analytical strategies and reflective approaches, the combination of these elements produces a wide variety of ethnographies. Here, the methodological freedom of ethnography, often praised as a unique quality, may become a source of uncertainty.

The uncertainty that emanates from this methodological freedom is often compensated for through local conventions, yet it frequently recurs when ethnographers enter an international community. When presenting to an international community, ethnographers attempt to convince their audience that their ethnography is a truthful illustration of social life in a field. Drawing on Foucault's (2001) exploration of truth, such illustrations can be seen as practices of truth-telling, 'a verbal activity in which a speaker expresses their personal relationship to truth'. From this perspective, international ethnographic communities enable us to put our ethnographic self at risk by speaking the truth about a field in the community and being criticised for expressing this truth. International communities thus can provide spaces for truth-telling and criticism, while at the same time, suspending some dependencies and power structures of local academic communities.

Exploring Global Assemblages and Products of Bricolage

International communities permit ethnographers to explore problems in education beyond a national scale, enabling us to comprehend how local educational phenomena are part of global assemblages. Since educational phenomena are rarely confined to single nation states, collaborations in international ethnographic communities permit the development of descriptions of such assemblages in education, highlighting global relations of educational phenomena and related processes of territorialisation (Collier & Ong, 2005). International collaborations thus enable researchers to compare national policy and governance rationalities, as well as illustrate similarities and differences in enacting policies, performance measurements

and accountability mechanisms. Drawing on such collaborations, ethnographers have developed substantial narratives about educational policy (Ball et al., 2017), individualised learning (Kakos & Fritzsche, 2020) or university reforms (Wright & Rabo, 2010).

From a methodological point of view, such narratives are often the product of bricolage, developed in processes that involve construction and reconstruction, contextual negotiation and readjustment, so as to reveal the relationship between the researcher's perspective of seeing and the social location of their history. While engaging in bricolage and crafting, a narrative is a highly personal process; nonetheless, ethnographic knowledge production is dedicated to a form of rigor that considers relationships, resonances and disjunctions between rationalistic modes of epistemology and cultural and subjugated expressions of educational problems. Sharing one's own bricolage and narratives in an international community can support this personal process and enable us to relate our own ethnographic writing to global assemblages.

Conclusions—Crossing (Not Only National) Borders in Transnational Collaborations[5]

With the aim of advancing methodological reflections through the composition of the collaborative, we have considered many facets of what it means to collaborate across national borders when conducting ethnographic research in educational contexts.

The underlying theoretical basis of the methodological endeavours presented here is very much in line with the general ideas of the interpretative paradigm. This is not just about the actual processing of meaning in situations and interactions, of knowledge production, so to speak. It is also always about engaging with what people do together in specific contexts. In this sense, the credo of symbolic interactionism is also applicable to work described as transnational collaborations. It is about 'doing things together' (Becker, 1986), about interactions and concepts of collective action that focus on the interplay of the most diverse actors, courses of action, situational definitions and contextual factors. The routines of a permanent interplay between interpretation and action are fundamentally questioned by collaborative work. As stated in the interpretative paradigm, the participants must first reach a more or less common perception of the situation, actively accompany the course of their actions and interactions in an ongoing process of interpretation, and then draw conclusions from this. The negotiating, the explicit meaning and sense-making, as well as the inductive and abductive processes, are at the heart of these endeavours.

The first and foremost gain from such an endeavour seems to result from the massive reorientation process that occurs during the collaborative exchange. It even surpasses the already high threshold of in-built methodological uncertainty in ethnographic work. The shifting of interpretational

frames, the systematic production of uncertainty, the need to make the implicit explicit, the reframing of existing ethnographic texts, the effect of being lost—these all contribute to the defamiliarisation of familiar ethnographic material and thus to the production of new interpretations and new knowledge. This specific mode of production results in bricolages and assemblages in the field of tension between productive uncertainty and uncertain productivity—like with this text. As our examples have shown, there are also quite pragmatic aspects to collaborating across a multitude of borders. These borders are created by national, regional and local, as well as disciplinary cultures of doing ethnography, but also by institutional and political restrictions and conditions. This specific work of crossing borders includes many organisational efforts, of course. But most of all, it involves some deep thinking about how to create an environment to work in, a community of practice that, for a period of time, allows one to overcome these borders and use the evolving space to think, talk about and write 'compelling collages' (Beach, 2010). It also involves a special kind of reflexivity so as to be able to become conscious of how those involved in the process are being positioned or position themselves in such a multifaceted field. Creating such transnational spaces seems to be an important way of further developing what doing ethnography means and what it can result in. Most of all, we would like to inspire and encourage fellow ethnographers to engage in such endeavours of transnational collaboration. Although they include experiences of being clueless, overwhelmed and lost in organisational complications and messiness, they also turn out to be very productive.

Notes

1 Written by Anja Sieber Egger and Gisela Unterweger.
2 Written by Susan Wright.
3 Written by Magnus Frank and Florian Weitkämper.
4 Written by Clemens Wieser.
5 Written by Anja Sieber Egger and Gisela Unterweger.

References

Alemu, S. K., Qu, M., & Sakhiyya, Z. (2022). Voices of internationalisation of higher education from sub-Saharan Africa, China and Indonesia. *Learning and Teaching*, *15*(3), 2–31.

Ball, S. J. (2017). *Foucault as educator*. Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-50302-8

Ball, S. J., Junemann, C., & Santori, D. (2017). *Edu.net: Globalisation and education policy mobility*. Routledge.

Beach, D. (2010). Identifying and comparing Scandinavian ethnography: Comparisons and influences. *Ethnography and Education*, *5*(1), 49–63. https://doi.org/10.1080/17457821003768455

Beach, D., & Larsson, S. (2022). On developments in ethnographic research: The case of two Swedish Universities. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *21*. https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221084432

Becker, H. (1986). *Doing things together: Selected papers.* Northwestern University Press.

Berli, O. (2019). Die kollektive Arbeit des Interpretierens und ihre Konventionen. In R. Hitzler, J. Reichertz, & N. Schröer (Eds.), *Kritik der Hermeneutischen Wissenssoziologie* (pp. 136–146). Beltz.

Breidenstein, G. (2017). Interdisziplinäre tradition und disziplinäre Konvention in der erziehungswissenschaftlichen Ethnographie. *ZQF*, *1*, 9–20.

Breidenstein, G., Hirschauer, S., Kalthoff, H., & Nieswand, B. (2020). *Ethnografie: Die Praxis der Feldforschung*. UTB.

Butcher, C. N. (2017). Resources for hope: Ideas for alternatives from heterodox higher education institutions. *Learning and Teaching*, *10*(1), 66–86.

Collier, S., & Ong, A. (2005). Global assemblages, anthropological problems. In A. Ong & S. Collier (Eds.), *Global assemblages: Technology, politics, and ethics as anthropological problems* (pp. 3–21). Blackwell Publishing.

Delamont, S., Atkinson, P., & Pugsley, L. (2010). The concept smacks of magic: Fighting familiarity today. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 26*(1), 3–10.

Eberle, T. (2011). Abduktion in phänomenologischer Perspektive. In N. Schröer & O. Bidlo (Eds.), *Die Entdeckung des Neuen*. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Eisenhart, M. (2017). A matter of scale: Multi-scale ethnographic research on education in the United States. *Ethnography and Education, 12*(2), 134–147.

Engel, N., & Köngeter, S. (2014). Transnationalisierung von Wissen—Elemente einer pädagogischen Theorie der Übersetzung. In D. Bender, A. Duscha, T. Hollstein, L. Huber, K. Klein-Zimmer, & C. Schmitt (Eds.), *Orte transnationaler Wissensproduktion* (pp. 204–237). Beltz.

Forsey, M. (2010). Ethnography as participant listening. *Ethnography*, *11*(4), 558–572. https://doi.org/10.1177/1466138110372587

Foucault, M. (2001). *Fearless speech*. MIT.

Frank, M. (2021). *Eingeladen zum sohbet. Eine differenzreflexive Ethnographie muslimischer Bildungspraxis*. Springer VS.

Fritzsche, B. (2021). Jenseits des Fremdverstehens: Eine Diskussion übersetzungstheoretischer Inspirationen für die Vergleichende Erziehungswissenschaft. *Tertium Comparationis*, *27*(2), 116–140.

Fritzsche, B., Hekel, N., Kuhn, M., Maeder, C., Neumann, S., Sieber Egger, A., Unterweger, A., & Weitkämper, F. (2022). Produktion von Vulnerabilitäten und symbolische Exklusion in Kreisen. In B. Hünersdorf, G. Breidenstein, J. Dinkelaker, O. Schnoor, & T. Tyagunova (Eds.), *Going public? Erziehungswissenschaftliche Ethnographie und ihre Öffentlichkeiten* (pp. 119–133). Springer.

Geier, T., & Frank, M. (2022). Religiöse Positionierungen in Bildungskreisen der 'Gülen-Bewegung'. *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik*, *2*(68), 139–153.

Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies*, *14*(3), 575–599.

Hirschauer, S. (2008). Die Empiriegeladenheit von Theorien und der Erfindungsreichtum der Praxis. In H. Kalthoff, S. Hirschauer, & G. Lindemann (Eds.), *Theoretische empirie* (pp. 165–189). Suhrkamp.

Ingold, T. (2021). Anthropology is not ethnography. In T. Ingold (Ed.), *Being alive: Essays on movement, knowledge and description* (pp. 277–296). Routledge.

Ingold, T. (2022). *Imagining for real: Essays on creation, attention and correspondence*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003171713

Kakos, M., & Fritzsche, B. (2020). *Meta-ethnographic synthesis in education: Challenges, aims and possibilities*. Routledge.

Katz, J. (2019). On becoming an ethnographer. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *48*(1), 16–50. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241618777801

Kuhn, M. (2013). *Professionalität im kindergarten*. Springer.

Lahelma, E., Lappalainen, S., Mietola, R., & Palmu, T. (2014). Discussions that 'tickle our brains': Constructing interpretations through multiple ethnographic data-sets. *Ethnography and Education, 9*(1), 51–65.

Lassiter, L. E. (2005). *The Chicago guide to collaborative ethnography.* University of Chicago Press.

Lewis, N., Robertson, S., Lim, M. A., Komljenovic, J., Muellerleile, C., Shore, C., & Bajenova, T. (2022). Market making and the (re) production of knowledge in public universities. *Learning and Teaching: International Journal of Higher Education in the Social Sciences*, *15*(3), 56–109.

Maeder, C. (2018). 'Die Lego sind heute nicht offen.' Die wissensmässige Belegung des Raums als ein Gesellschaftsdispositiv im Kindergarten. In M. Pfadenhauer & A. Poferl (Eds.), *Wissensrelationen* (pp. 421–429). Beltz Juventa.

Neumann, S., Kuhn, M., Hekel, N., Brandenberg, K., & Tinguely, L. (2019). Der institutionelle Sinn der Partizipation. Befunde einer ethnografischen Studie in schweizerischen Kindertageseinrichtungen. In A. Sieber Egger, G. Unterweger, M. Jäger, M. Kuhn, & J. Hangartner (Eds.), *Kindheit(en) in formalen, nonformalen und informellen Bildungskontexten* (pp. 321–342). Springer.

Sancho Gil, J. M., & Hernández-Hernández, F. (Eds.). (2021). *Becoming an educational ethnographer: The challenges and opportunities of undertaking research.* Routledge.

Shore, C., & Wright, S. (Eds.). (1997). *Anthropology of policy: Perspectives on governance and power.* Routledge.

Sieber Egger, A., Unterweger, G., & Kaiser, F. (2021). Snack time in kindergarten as a cultural practice—Implications for processes of subjectivation. *Children & Society*, *35*(4), 563–576.

Smith, D. E. (2005). *Institutional ethnography: A sociology for people.* Rowman Altamira.

Smith, R. J., & Delamont, S. (Eds.). (2019). *The lost ethnographies: Methodological insights from projects that never were.* Emerald Publishing.

Trifuljesko, S., & Choi, O. H. (2022). Peripheries within the higher education centres: Internationalisation experiences in Finland and UK. *Learning and Teaching*, *15*(3), 32–55.

Tsing, A. L. (2015). *The mushroom at the end of the world: On the possibility of life in capitalist ruins.* Princeton University Press.

Tummons, J., & Beach, D. (2020). Ethnography, materiality, and the principle of symmetry: Problematising anthropocentrism and interactionism in the ethnography of education. *Ethnography and Education*, *15*(3), 286–299. https://doi.org/10.1080/17457823.2019.1683756

Tyrer, D. (2013). *The politics of Islamophobia: Race, power and fantasy.* Pluto Press.

Van Maanen, J. (2011). *Tales of the field: On writing ethnography* (2nd ed.). University of Chicago Press.

Walford, G. (2018). Recognizable continuity: A defense of multiple methods. In D. Beach, C. Bagley, & S. M. da Silva (Eds.), *The Wiley handbook of ethnography of education* (pp. 36–49). Wiley Blackwell.

Weitkämper, F. (2022). Un/doing authority and social inequality. *Educational Review*, *76*(1), 199–215.

Wieser, C., & Pilch Ortega, A. (2020). Ethnography in higher education: An introduction. In C. Wieser & A. Pilch Ortega (Eds.), *Ethnography in higher education* (pp. 1–10). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-30381-5_1

Wimmer, A., & Glick Schiller, N. (2002). Methodological nationalism and beyond: Nation–state building, migration and the social sciences. *Global networks, 2*(4), 301–334.

Wright, S. (2004). Politically reflexive practitioners. In D. Dracklé & I. R. Edgar (Eds.), *Current policies and practices in European social anthropology education* (Vol. 2, pp. 34–52). Berghahn Books.

Wright, S. (2016). Universities in a knowledge economy or ecology? Policy, contestation and abjection. *Critical Policy Studies*, *10*(1), 59–78.
Wright, S., & Greenwood, D. J. (Eds.). (2017). Recreating universities for the public good. Special issue of learning and teaching. *International Journal of Higher Education in the Social Sciences*, *10*(1).
Wright, S., & Rabo, A. (2010). Introduction: Anthropologies of university reform. *Social Anthropology*, *18*(1), 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8676.2009.00096.x

12 On the Vulnerability of Epistemological Processes

How Does ‘the New’ Enter Ethnography?

Juliane Engel, Anke Wischmann, Serafina Morrin, Mirja Silkenbeumer and Saskia Terstegen

Introduction: Ethnographic Research and the Matrix of Vulnerability

The basic assumption of this contribution is that it is crucial to recognise knowledge, subjects and orders that structure perception and perceptibility in research processes. With the question ‘What is life at all?’ Butler gets to the heart of a fundamental epistemological problem (cf. 2016 p. 9) because it concerns which preconditions or ‘conditions of perceptibility’ influence which life is recognised as life. Butler speaks of frames that produce recognisability (framing). This connection applies in principle to any intersubjective reference, including and potentially especially to ethnographic research.

When ethnographic research is dedicated to phenomena and practices of social difference and power relations, vulnerability becomes relevant in an ambivalent way because it needs to be recognised, and at the same time, it inevitably becomes reproduced and therefore produced anew. It can then be argued that in the researcher’s understanding process such an entanglement should be kept open—so as to dissolve boundaries where research objects and their already socially recognised norms can be not only repeated but also subverted and rethought (cf. Schaffer, 2008; Carnap, 2019). To which extend such (re-)significations in the research process can be used to inspire the development of pluralising objects is a question that particularly concerns researchers who deal with vulnerable groups (cf. Langer et al., 2013). How fields of the sayable and visible can be developed empirically, and hence, how objects that have not yet been described and recognised can be revealed and accorded validity is, among others, based on cultural theories about the matrix of intelligibility (Butler, 1991, 2016). This can be analysed as an achievement of subjectification (Buchner, 2018, p. 95 f.). In this way, the chapter contributes to the qualitative research discourse on vulnerability to date through plural approaches to the materiality of knowledge and the relational forms of subjectivation associated with it. Beyond traditional research methods, such as individualising interviews that address the sovereign and autonomous subject once again, research methods are being developed that focus on the sociomaterial dimension of subject dimensions so as to investigate vulnerability.

DOI: 10.4324/9781032629384-15

This chapter has been made available under a (CC-BY-NC-ND) 4.0 license.

A vulnerability–theoretical approach is then discussed from different perspectives as it opens up approaches to the question of how something new can find its way into theory building, methodology and data management. The vulnerability of epistemological processes is linked to expectations that are themselves vulnerable. Furthermore, expectations of vulnerability can act as othering—and hurt. So which expectations arise? Insights and recognition always involve the unlearning (Spivak, 1996) of previous knowledge. However, knowledge can also be rejected or ignored in order to avoid injuries (Castro Varela, 2017).

The Vulnerability of Knowledge

According to Butler (2005a), we need to understand the subject as a bodily and related subject that has to be recognised as a subject to become intelligible and with it visible (in the context of ethnographic research here). It is often presumed that the researched subjects are (more or less) autonomous, rational and sovereign persons who are in a position to create a life, to make a living and to make choices and hence can be understood as self-reliant or even independent learners (see Chadderton, 2018, p. 131 ff.). This assumption embeds the precondition for research measures, performances and achievements in educational contexts (e.g., Zyngier, 2008). This implies that the subjects in educational contexts and thus educational research are able and in a position to have access to and use universal knowledge. On the other hand, it is presumed that the researcher's knowledge—such as theories, methodologies and methods—is objective and represents a universal truth. In terms of educational theory, the concept of vulnerability opens up an alternative understanding of the subject to that of a sovereign or autonomous subject or a subject that is thought of as invulnerable. Thus, it sensitises us to taking seriously the constitutive vulnerability inherent in every educational process,

> because in openness we show ourselves to be vulnerable—also to the others who are involved in the construction of the human being in education. It could be formulated as a thesis that only because we are vulnerable, we are also imageable. This concept of *Bildsamkeit*, however, would have to be shifted and forsake its individualistic version, its individualistic heritage, so that a connectivity to the decentring of the subject associated with vulnerability could emerge.
>
> (Janssen, 2018, p. 216, chapter authors' translation)

It is striking that a dichotomy or binary logic often continues to be inherent in educational scholars' perspectives on vulnerable subjects, one which assumes an uninjured or invulnerable state of the subject that they might achieve through education and learning (Burghardt et al., 2017; Brotherton & Cronin, 2021). However, if we take seriously that all humans are initially intelligible (cf. Chadderton, 2023), the degree of vulnerability is not a given, but is produced on an

everyday basis and is related to visibility in research, that is, in data, methodologies and theories. In numerous arguments, however, vulnerability continues to be situated on the part of the subject. However, novelty of ethnographic research also comes in, determining the genesis of knowledge as vulnerable and thus sensitising access to an equal extent. Accordingly, if one understands not only the subjects as vulnerable but also the world, the objects that produce them and the process of relating, it becomes possible to ethnographically analyse moments of mutual nonfitting and nonrecognition as potential moments of transgression of habitual relations of the self and the world. Vulnerability is then systematically located not only on the part of the subject but also and especially on the part of the order that is thus is readiness for disposition. Yet, as Foucault (1982) pointed out, the truth is discursively produced and this procedure is related to existing power structures. Thus, knowledge of the subjects involved in research is neither simply and easily accessible for all nor is it objective and 'true'. Instead it is fluid, contested and may differ radically depending on the position of the subject and its (non)existing intelligibility.

> [A] regime of truth offers the terms that make self-recognition possible. These terms are outside the subject to some degree, but they are also presented as the available norms through which self-recognition can take place, so that what I can 'be' quite literally is constrained in advance by a regime of truth that decides what will and will not be a recognizable form of being. Although the regime of truth decides in advance what form recognition can take, it does not fully constrain this.
>
> (Butler, 2005b, p. 22)

What is crucial in terms of becoming an intelligible subject is the frame that enables intelligibility, and this frame is interwoven with norms that define what and who is recognisable (Butler, 2005b). Knowledge prefigures the subject's relation to the norm and the norm determines legitimate forms and even utterances—which are always bodily bound—of knowledge. Academic knowledge used to claim to be true and superior to subjects—and still does so in some spheres. However, feminist and postcolonial studies show that scientific knowledge, like any other knowledge, is situated (Haraway, 1988). And it needs—as it is bodily bound—infrastructure:

> For the body to move, it must usually have a surface of some kind, and it must have at its disposal whatever technical supports allow for movement to take place. So, the pavement and the street are already to be understood as requirements of the body as it exercises its rights of mobility. No one moves without a supportive environment and set of technologies.
>
> (Butler, 2014, p. 3)

With this in mind, the researcher's knowledge can be questioned or convulsed by the infrastructure, hence recognising its vulnerability. This might be

understood as a threat; however, it may be the source for new perceptions in research. Furthermore, the relationality of knowledge can allow new knowledge compositions to emerge in research processes. Qualitative research can offer opportunities not only to reflect on vulnerability and the relationality of subjects and (their) knowledge but to understand vulnerability as a precondition and opportunity to think anew.

The Fragility of the Research Process

To show the relevance of such considerations throughout an ethnographic research process, we would like to discuss the notion of vulnerability in terms of visibility in video-based research within the context of flight and migration. This can contribute to examining the potential of a critical view on the vulnerability of epistemological processes based on empirical data. These data are taken from a study (Morrin, 2023) that aimed to find out how collective social orders and a foundation of meaning are established in theatre projects in so-called welcome school classes or in pedagogical settings in reception centres for refugees. Theatrical play situations with children who had newly arrived in Germany and attended a welcome school class or lived in a refugee reception centre were videographed. The intention was to ascertain how collective social orders and a foundation of meaning are established. This seemed to be of relevance because such pedagogical settings are characterised by fluctuation; that is, people come together who cannot know whether they will meet again in this place the next day. Viewing theatrical practices in the context of flight and migration, the study interlinks the aspects of aesthetics (Seel, 2004) and alienness (Waldenfels, 2020). Both concepts allow an understanding of ambivalence: An aesthetic perception is not fixed on a single sense or feature but requires simultaneity (Seel, 2004). In a comparable way, the effort to deal with alienness, following Waldenfels (2020), means endeavouring to grasp the intangible because that which becomes perceptible as unfamiliar eludes any conceptualisation. Such a linkage of aesthetics and alienness permits a difference-based focus on this ambivalence that may prove beneficial when exploring the aesthetic constitution of videographic data collection (a) and videographic data analysis (b) hereunder.

To this end, the process of the data collection is initially considered (a), for already here an aspect of sensemaking or intelligibility arises. For the study—while first setting up various cameras and also collecting the data with a moveable handheld camera—the focus was placed on the centre of the room, where the children had gathered and the main action in the theatre project happened. It might seem obvious that the positioning of the camera can only be fragmentary as such and that this disregards many aspects of the surroundings and what we can see. Yet this is also accompanied by the fact that this fragmentary picture determines the theme of the research, its subject. While gathering the data it was not considered that one of the doors leading into the room could play a decisive role with regard to the research

question. Due to the researcher's 'non-thinking in the name of the normative' (Butler, 2016, p. 137), the cameras focused on the detailed simultaneity of the interactions; at the centre of the room where the children were playing. Thus, the doors were not in the video image frame most of the time. However, through this, it became more difficult to allow the heterotopic aspects to come to the fore. Following Foucault (1997), heterotopias are *de facto* realised utopias that include local areas which differ from the norm, as spaces that are incompatible meet there. Reception facilities for refugees can be considered as being heterotopic spaces because they represent a 'place without a place' (Foucault, 1997, p. 332) where people live in an intermediate stage. Based on this understanding, reception facilities are self-contained places that cannot be easily accessed or left and in which one lives outside the so-called normal reality. These heterotopic aspects became even more amplified by the fact that in the reception facility, the theatre project was held in the building's *Mehrzweckraum*, a multipurpose room where chairs, boxes and shelves were temporarily placed, waiting for use at different times. During the videorecording, one of the doors of the multipurpose room, which leads outside and to the outdoors, was opened many times. It was opened from the inside when participating children wanted reassurance that their parents knew where they were. And it was also opened from the outside when curious siblings would peep in or parents would look for their children who had gone missing. Powerful and even emotional scenes occurred here that might have been capable of illustrating the heterotopic situation of this 'place without a place' (Foucault, 1997). Because of the 'non-thinking in the name of the normative' (Butler, 2016, p. 137), it was not expected that the door could be of interest while setting up the cameras and during the videorecording time. But especially in regard to the ambivalence of spaces, the heterotopic aspects (Foucault, 1997) and the importance of 'border lives' (Bhabha, 1994, p. 1), the perspective of connecting the multipurpose room with a space that opens to the outside beyond it could potentially have been of relevance for the research question. For that, we may, however, presume that it would not have been easy to obtain consent to film the random people passing by 'outside'; in that sense, data protection aspects, as indeed quality demands on the empirical analysis (comparability of the material) led to the fact that the situations occurring at the door were not included in the data analysis (Morrin, 2023). Hence, not only the 'outside' but also the 'alien' (Waldenfels, 2020) becomes a 'non-place' (Waldenfels, 2020, p. 25). The door too becomes a 'non-door' because something occurs here that does not become the subject of the study—at least not explicitly—thus reinforcing the heterotopic aspects of the invisibility of a 'non-door' (Morrin, 2023). In this regard, the camera and its positions influenced the framing and the reframing of the situation.

Another aspect of relevance in epistemological processes should be highlighted here: the sensemaking and intelligibility that occurs through the

analyses of the data (b). Within the process of viewing the video data, various constructions of meanings arise. That which is being filmed and seen by the viewer and the way or the manner in which this is filmed can blend together. This may be illustrated with an example. A filmed situation shows a closeup of three boys who appear and reveal themselves in different ways before the camera. While they look into the camera and laugh loudly, they lift their arms or hide their faces (Morrin, 2023). One may now analyse this situation as such: How do they enact themselves, and how do they relate to each other or interact with the camera? This scene was also recorded by a different camera that shows an alternative framing of the same situation. Here, it becomes apparent that these three boys are sitting together with seven other children and an adult in a circle. Sitting opposite the boys are a group of girls, and one of these girls is holding up the camera and filming the three boys. The scene now immediately gains a different character (Morrin, 2023), which is reinforced by light effects. While the first shot was filmed with backlight and the three boys looked very similar, this second recording is brighter. Various shades of their clothing as indeed different tones in the children's skin, hair and eye colour become visible. This is considerable and of relevance because epistemological processes are inextricably interwoven with hegemonic readings and visualisation processes where bodies can be recognised and thus become intelligible. Each mediatisation produces a 'frame', as Butler (2016) terms it, one that makes itself invisible as a material process. Thus, there can be intermingling between the aesthetics of the process of filming and the aesthetics of the process of viewing what is filmed, which Engel and others (2019, n.p.) term the 'hidden mediality'.

We are aware that ethnography is always linked to 'situated knowledge' (Haraway, 1988). Breidenstein and others emphasise the construction of the field (cf. 2020, p. 51), because they regard ethnography as being trapped between naturalism and constructivism. However, based on these examples, it is shown how video ethnography contains visual aspects that are capable of revealing the extent to which the research subject is shaped by the vulnerability of the researchers' gaze and its inherent hegemony. Investigating how the dimensions of mediality, materiality and aesthetics interweave may provide us with a postcolonial, informed methodology because this permits the possibility of recognising ambivalences and paradoxes. Following Schaffer (2008), visibility is understood as a binary notion that also implies invisibility. Such an approach enables us to critically reflect upon the way of looking at and seeing the video footage as being entangled with hegemonic visual codes, and thus call into question to which extent vulnerable fields of the visible can be opened up, shut off and determined throughout the research process. The vulnerability of knowledge is a reciprocal process between the research subject and the researcher. It is like a thorn, shaping the course of the research from the very beginning: during the surveying of the videographic data, in the evaluation process and in the connecting of theories.

The Vulnerability of Data

Although data are the mainstay for producing knowledge, they are by no means neutral, but rather the results of interaction, situatedness and interpretation. In current debates on the reuse of qualitative data, this notion is becoming challenged. From an informational perspective, data are often referred to as a 'concept . . . that tends to reduce or eliminate the dimensions of contextuality and referentiality that are central to the ethnographic research process' (Imeri, 2018, pp. 223–224, chapter authors' translation). While in the United Kingdom, the use of *qualitative* secondary analysis 'must now be regarded as mainstream' (Bishop & Kuula-Luumi, 2017), this discussion is just beginning in Germany. The basis for our deliberations here was provided by the QualiBi project.[1] It addressed epistemological, methodological and ethical issues of archiving and reusing data while building up a data repository with qualitative data from all fields of educational research in the German-speaking area. As this itself was an explorative research process, our considerations here stem from discussions with other researchers on their hopes and concerns in terms of providing data or performing secondary analysis.

In ethnography, researchers are physically involved in the field and with research participants; they try to make sense of practices, meaning and their own positioning, which are documented in the data they produce. Who becomes vulnerable in which ways depends on the distinct relation to others, on our positioning in power relations and on situated dynamics. Conducting research thus means becoming involved in producing vulnerability, power and sometimes even oppression, despite reflecting upon how power plays out in our research (Terstegen, 2023, p. 97 ff.). Following Butler (2005b, p. 48), it can be argued that vulnerability is a *conditio humana* for everyone, on the one hand, and that the possibilities of becoming an intelligible subject are unequally distributed and performatively constituted, on the other hand. When transferring this argument to the topic of data, it is not the data themselves that become vulnerable but the vulnerabilities that they produce. The field of secondary analysis is particularly suitable to further explore this: While some vulnerabilities are vividly discussed in qualitative research, others tend to remain invisible. From our discussions, we have learned that the vulnerability of the *research participants* is one key argument in the debate on archiving data, while the *vulnerability of the researcher* themself seems to be a crucial but more 'hidden' one we intend to bring to light here:

As discussed earlier, research has the potential to cause harm, especially when working with so-called vulnerable groups. In such 'delicate' research, the data produced are described as being 'particularly sensitive'. Especially in terms of the archiving, it is hard to foresee the consequences of research, as changes in power relations and the public discourse can suddenly make a particular item of data 'problematic' and have negative consequences for the research subjects or their family members that were not foreseeable at the

time the data were produced and released (Rosenthal, 2013). So, while data themselves cannot be vulnerable, they are documents of vulnerability and able to cause this anew.

Apart from this broadly discussed (and undoubtedly extremely important) dimension, we have also observed that some hesitation occurring at the second glance turns out to be a fear of being exposed or of exposing other researchers. In the reanalysis of field notes, the author of the related text—perhaps a familiar colleague—becomes part of a new story. A feeling of discomfort or even of a lack of solidarity might arise, even when the goal of the analysis most certainly is not to make this person an object of the research.

For us, this raises the question of in which ways traditions and norms of the research context (in our case, German academia) shape notions of 'good' ethnographic practices, such as the production of texts. For instance, Breidenstein (2017) has observed different strategies for how ethnographers in education present their findings. While some write—in the first person—about personal feelings and surprises, as well as about mistakes and failures, the colleagues notes based in German academia especially tend to exclude personal and instead present extensive interpretations of short texts. Such texts, they argue, produce 'data' as an object, as they split up the text from the person, the interpretative from the 'I'. The researcher becomes anonymous, almost invisible. The finding that researchers become invisible as a person, namely, when vanishing behind the letter 'I' for 'interviewer', is also supported by a methodological analysis of interview questions in different data repositories (Houben & Eckert, 2022). And in biographical research, Christine Demmer (2016) argues, for instance, that although it is not debated that feelings like disgust shape the interview situation and, therefore, the data, it is still regarded as 'unscientific' or 'unprofessional' to write about this. The underlying vulnerabilities and fears that become apparent here seem to be worth investigating further analytically, also against the background of the distinct histories of qualitative research and its methodologies. From an ethical point of view, we should emphasise the necessity to protect the research participant, rather than lapse into self-thematization (Unger, 2020). Ultimately, 'we' researchers are still the ones who have the power to decide on what is written down and published, as indeed who benefits from it. But the notion of an 'invisible' researcher subject disrupts the image of the researcher who is expected to be 'in control' and, if not, at least pretends to be—in ethnography and beyond.

To be clear: Data *per se* cannot be vulnerable and do not become so through subsequent use. The challenges and potentials of the reuse of archived data in qualitative research must also be discussed in terms of who and/or what is considered to be particularly worthy of protection and why. Questions of research ethics, methodology and data protection law are closely intertwined here. Which voices are heard and what becomes (in)visible when certain data are not made available or are anonymised to such an extent that it is hardly possible to work with them in a useful way? And can that which is commonly

understood as protection for the 'researched' not also lead to concealment, to some aspects being rendered invisible when not entered in the archive? Conversely, the archiving of data could perhaps also contribute to such protection, for example, when preexisting data on traumatic and violent experiences are reused and these do not have to be collected over and again. The topic of archiving and reusing data demonstrates that not only do we ask research participants to trust others, but that this task also falls upon ourselves.

Concluding Remarks

We are aware that the concept of the vulnerability of epistemological processes can itself also contain a normative component. Burghardt and others (Burghardt et al., 2017) draw attention to the fact that in the modern era, the requirement is not just to recognise vulnerability or to identify an evil. It is also necessary to overcome this evil. For this reason, it is important to mention the scope of what is desirable when using the term vulnerability. Our aim here was to show how vulnerability is construed and challenged, while at the same time, acknowledging that we contribute to specific notions of vulnerability with our research.

The examples given in our contribution underline that vulnerability does not exist *a priori*. It is produced through in/visibility, which is related to intelligibility in research, for instance, when making people visible while filming classrooms or rendering researchers invisible through our language (such as the 'I' for interviewer). Videographic methods here could contribute to making the researcher visible in a different way. But vulnerabilities are also both produced and potentially highlighted when creating a research setting or entering a particular research field. The analytical differentiation between the dimensions of research—concerning (1) theory and epistemology, (2) the research process of data collection and (3) the (re)use of data for particular research aims and scopes—is empirically and practically impossible, since they are interwoven with each other. However, exploring different layers of vulnerabilities might provide access to new insights in ethnographic research in education: By recognising the vulnerability of knowledge, the researcher and the participants, as well as how they relate and respond to each other, we might see, hear and experience in a new way. The examples discussed here referred especially to the role of vulnerability in the face of structural inequalities, and hence, the considerations presented might prove helpful when responding to the inevitable reflection on the reification of power relations and intelligibility in education studies.

Note

1 Funded by the German Research Fund (DFG, 2020–2023). Mirja Silkenbeumer headed the project at Goethe University Frankfurt, while Saskia Terstegen was a member of the team.

References

Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The location of culture*. Routledge.
Bishop, L., & Kuula-Luumi, A. (2017). Revisiting qualitative data reuse: A decade on. *Sage Open*, *7*(1).
Breidenstein, G. (2017). Interdisziplinäre Tradition und disziplinäre Konvention in der erziehungswissenschaftlichen Ethnographie. *ZqF*, *18*(1), 9–20. https://doi.org/10.3224/zqf.v18i1.02
Breidenstein, G., Hirschauer, S., Kalthoff, H., & Niewand, B. (2020). *Ethnographie. Die Praxis der Feldforschung* (3rd ed.). UVK-Verlag.
Brotherton, G., & Cronin, M. (2021). *Working with vulnerable children, young people and families* (2nd ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429055218
Buchner, T. (2018). *Die Subjekte der Integration*. Julius Klinkhardt. https://doi.org/10.25656/01:15764
Burghardt, D., Dederich, M., Dziabel, N., Höhne, T., Lohwasser, D., Stöhr, R., & Zirfas, J. (2017). Einleitung. In M. Dederich & J. Zirfas (Eds.), *Vulnerabilität. Pädagogische Herausforderung und Aufgabe* (pp. 7–18). Kohlhammer.
Butler, J. (1990). *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity.* New York/London: Routledge Classics.
Butler, J. (2005a). *Gefährdetes Leben*. Suhrkamp.
Butler, J. (2005b). *Giving an account of oneself.* Fordham University Press.
Butler, J. (2014). *Rethinking vulnerability and resistance.* http://bibacc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Rethinking-Vulnerability-and-Resistance-Judith-Butler.pdf
Butler, J. (2016). *Frames of war: When is life grievable?* Verso.
Carnap, A. (2019). *Die (Re-)Produktion vergeschlechtlichter Subjekte in ambivalent-anerkennenden Wahrnehmungshandlungen von Lehrer*innen. Zentrale Vorannahmen und ausgewählte Ergebnisse einer rekonstruktiven Studie ausgehend von Fotogruppendiskussionen* (pp. 1–16). Open Access Online Repository of the DIPF.
Castro Varela, M. d. M. (2017). *(Un-)Wissen. Verlernen als komplexer Lernprozess.* www.migrazine.at/artikel/un-wissen-verlernen-als-komplexer-lernprozess
Chadderton, C. (2018). *Judith Butler, race and education*. Palgrave Macmillan.
Chadderton, C. (2023). Covid, schooling and race in England: A case of necropolitics. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *26*(1), 112–128. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2022.2069736
Demmer, C. (2016). Interviewen als involviertes Spüren. Der Leib als Erkenntnisorgan im biografieanalytischen Forschungsprozess [35 paragraphs]. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, *17*(1), Article 13. http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs1601139
Engel, J., Jörissen, B., Klepacki, T., & Möller, E. (2019). Transgressive videography—Videographic access to practices of subjectivisation between materiality, mediality, and aesthetics. In G. Noblit (Ed.), *Oxford encyclopedia of qualitative research methods in education*. Oxford University Press.
Foucault, M. (1982). The subject and power. *Critical Inquiry*, *8*(4), 777–795. www.jstor.org/stable/1343197
Foucault, M. (1997). Of other spaces: Utopias and heterotopias. In N. Leach (Ed.), *Rethinking architecture: A reader in cultural theory* (pp. 330–336). Routledge.
Foucault, M. (2010). *The archaeology of knowledge*. Vintage Books. https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/kxp/detail.action?docID=6084939
Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledges. *Feminist Studies*, *14*(3), 575–599.
Houben, M., & Eckert, J. (2022). Die Arbeit mit archivierten Interviewdaten in einem methodologischen Sekundärforschungsprojekt [61 paragraphs]. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, *23*(1), Article 22. http://dx.doi.org/10.17169/fqs-23.1.3701

Imeri, S. (2018). Ordnen, archivieren, teilen. Forschungsdaten in den ethnologischen Fächern. *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*, *121*(2), 213–243. https://resolver.obvsg.at/urn:nbn:at:at-ubi:4-5937

Janssen, A. (2018). *Verletzbare Subjekte*. Budrich Uni Press.

Langer, P. C., Kühner, A., & Schweder, P. (2013). *Reflexive Wissensproduktion. Zu einem kritischen Methodenverständnis in qualitativer Forschung*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS.

Morrin, S. (2023). *Spielräume der Ordnungen*. Barbara Budrich.

Rosenthal, G. (2013). Was geschieht mit unseren Daten? Ein Plädoyer für eine Diskussion über die Möglichkeiten der Sekundärnutzung von autobiographischen Materialien. *Biographieforschung, Rundbrief*, *64*, 44–45.

Said, E. W. (1994). *Orientalism*. Random House.

Schaffer, J. (2008). *Ambivalenzen der Sichtbarkeit. Über die visuellen Strukturen der Anerkennung*. transcript Verlag.

Seel, M. (2004). *Aesthetics of appearing*. Stanford University Press.

Spivak, G. C. (1996). *The spivak reader*. Routledge.

Terstegen, S. (2023). *Das schulische Raceregime. (De-)Privilegierung und Widerstand an US-amerikanischen Highschools*. Springer VS.

von Unger, H. (2020). Management, Archivierung und Sekundärnutzung qualitativer For-schungsdaten zu sexueller Gewalt. In M. Wazlawik & B. Christmann (Eds.), *Forschungsdatenmanagement und Sekundärnutzung qualitativer Forschungsdaten* (pp. 45–74). Springer.

Waldenfels, B. (2020). *Topographie des Fremden* (8th ed.). Suhrkamp.

Zyngier, D. (2008). (Re)conceptualising student engagement: Doing education not doing time. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *24*(7), 1765–1776. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2007.09.004

13 Process Ontologies and the Many Potential Ethnographies

New Materialisms and Shifting Boundaries Between Humans, Animals and Things

Grit Höppner, Cornelia Schadler and Anna Wanka

Introduction

Educational ethnography has always had an interest in the spaces, artefacts and bodies of educational processes (Atkinson, 2010; Bollig et al., 2015; Delamont, 2013; Mills & Morton, 2013; Röhl, 2013). In recent decades, there has, however, been a shift in how materialities—such as spaces, artefacts and bodies—are being approached in the social sciences (Bennett & Joyce, 2010). Boundaries between entities have long been questioned and deconstructed by postmodern and poststructuralist theories. This was taken to a more substantial level with the 'material turn'. This shift implies a requestioning of boundaries and the resulting entities and dualisms that have long been taken for granted—the mind versus the body, the human versus the nonhuman, the discursive versus the material, or nature versus nurture. Some of the onto-epistemologies (Barad, 2007) created by this material turn can be subsumed under the umbrella term of new materialisms (Dolphijn & Tuin, 2012). They assume that none of these seeming entities is defined as an *a priori* entity or as the root of a specific process. Instead, new materialist process ontologies (Barad, 2007; Braidotti, 2006; Haraway, 2010) define all boundaries and entities as reconfigured in material-discursive differentiation processes. These processes of reconfiguration (or intra-action) are ever-continuing. As a consequence, we cannot define a specific entity as the cause for another (e.g., that a specific nature causes a specific behaviour). Therefore, we do not have to ask if a specific substance or thought is the foundation of specific processes nor do we have to ask which is more important than the other. Especially the latter question has structured social sciences and humanities for a long time (Hays, 1994; Layder, 2014; Paul, 1998). Instead, processes are defined as active material-discursive practices (Barad, 2007) that solidify as realms, substance and thought, and as all the specific entities (inscribed with specific knowledge and meaning) of which we know and do not know. Such an understanding of materiality consequently abolishes the differentiation between the material and the discursive, and this has significant implications for ethnographic practice.

In this chapter, we want to sensitise the readers to what the abolition of classical dualisms and the questioning of boundaries and entities mean for

DOI: 10.4324/9781032629384-16

This chapter has been made available under a (CC-BY-NC-ND) 4.0 license.

innovation and novelty in ethnographic research. We answer the question of 'What's new?!' by outlining core concepts of new materialisms and their implications for educational ethnography. To illustrate our arguments, we use the example of equestrianism, including seemingly bounded individual entities (humans, horses, riding gear, etc.) and the many entities they could and do become in multifold ethnographies.

Shifts of Perspectives Informed by New Materialisms and Methodological Implications for Ethnographies

The history of ethnographies in educational sciences has itself taken many shifts and turns, and multiple ontologies and theoretical perspectives—from symbolic interactionism to phenomenology and practice theories—coexist in this field (Delamont, 2013). They share a common understanding with new materialisms in that they see phenomena not as given or natural but performed and prone to contingency and transformation. However, new materialisms have conducted two shifts away from these perspectives that we understand as particularly important: first, the shift from human actions to material and discursive practices, and second, the shift from material and discursive practices to material-discursive practices.

When practice theories entered the field of educational ethnographies, they brought with them a decentralisation of the human subject (Hui et al., 2017). Whereas the term 'action' is strongly linked to a human actor, practices in the sense of practice theories highlight the embedded, decentralised qualities of doings; they are thus doings without clearly demarcated actors (Shove et al., 2012). As practices stretch in time and space, they form bundles, complexes and constellations and can thus produce larger phenomena (Nicolini, 2017; see also Budde, Rißler and Geßner in this volume). They are always woven into a nexus of other practices—the life course, for example, can thus be viewed as one gigantic constellation of social practices and life course transitions as a temporally smaller segment within this constellation. All phenomena, consequently, are slices or features of practice–arrangement nexuses (Schatzki, 2010, p. 139). In these arrangements, practices continuously relate and (re-) configure material and discursive elements and thus shift and change the overall practice arrangement. Seemingly static objects or entities are understood to be inherently fluid, unstable and plural ('multiple') as 'different and yet related objects' (Mol, 2002, p. 77). Central to this is thus a concern with performativity, and in particular with a posthumanist performativity (Barad, 2003). Hence, phenomena do not simply exist in stability but are constantly performed, done and undone in material-discursive practices.

Early practice theories thereby often emphasised the importance of materiality and criticised the social sciences for their language centrism. Doing so, they implicitly framed material elements as the neglected 'other' of discursive elements (cf. Schatzki's prior quote of 'doings' and 'sayings', 1996), and some scholars interpreted this as an invitation to differentiate between discursive

and nondiscursive practices (Wrana & Langer, 2017). However, more recent approaches explicitly acknowledge the inseparability of discursive and material elements in practice and speak of practice–discourse complexes (Reckwitz, 2006; Schatzki, 2017) or material-discursive practices (Barad, 2003, 2007). Barad, as one of the main representatives of new materialisms, problematises the boundaries many theories draw between materiality and discourse and moves beyond this dualism by understanding matter as always inherently entangled in discourse and discourse as always necessarily materially enacted.

Our task is now to reconsider research on equestrianism from this perspective. Recent traditional ethnographic research on equestrianism has focused on the human, the rider and their actions in the field of riding (Jones McVey, 2021), and the mutual relationship of two separate entities: the rider and the horse (Jones McVey, 2022), as well as the cultural meaning of riding for humans and the division of specific identities (Dashper, 2016; Endenburg, 1999), in addition to their meaning for educational processes (Frederiksen, 2019). Taking both shifts in perspective informed by new materialisms seriously in ethnographic research, this implies defining horseback riding as a practice. We can first identify the different practices and their elements that constitute horseback riding and make it intelligible as such. To put it simply, horseback riding requires bundles of specific elements—a horse and a rider—and binds together practices like mounting on and off, standing and moving, as well as—depending on the style and expertise—walking, trotting, galloping, lunging, jumping, dressage, and so on. All of these practices are both material and discursive at the same time. For example, when the legs of a person are placed on the back of a horse, we deal with both a material phenomenon—two bodies connecting—as well as a discursive phenomenon—a bodily connection intelligible as horseback riding. Furthermore, a new materialist approach to riding implies what Nicolini describes as the analytic task of 'zooming in' and 'zooming out' (2009). This means decentring the human subject and zooming in on the different elements of a practice, thereby deconstructing every seeming entity again into a set of material-discursive practices. For example, we cannot only approach riding as a practice, or mounting on and off as a 'sub-practice' of riding but also 'zoom in' on the elements of the rider, the riding gear, the spaces of riding (the soil, parkours, etc.), notions of a typical rider (e.g., female and able-bodied) and horse and deconstruct them into different practices—those of un/doing being a rider. In 'zooming out', we can take the opposite approach and decentre not only the human subject but also the practice of horseback riding from its single, situated performance so as to grasp the wider arrangement of its practices and follow the elements that are related and (re-)configured in it, for example, the infrastructures and institutions that organise riding and offer the acquisition of riding competencies (e.g., horseback riding training schools and riding associations), the markets that cater to it, the resources that are needed (e.g., money or space) and the infrastructures for stallions, rider magazines, etc. For ethnographic research, this implies expanding the ethnographic question of 'What is going on here?' with 'How is

the phenomenon of riding being done, which material-discursive elements are involved in its doing, and how are they related and (re-)configured?'

To take the shifts informed by new materialism seriously, we cannot assume the preexistence of the rider, horse, and other entities. Instead, we have to ask for the configurations of doing horseback riding and thus for the practices of un/doing the horseback rider and un/doing the horse: Which material-discursive practices constitute the seeming entities of rider and horse? This is what Barad (2003) frames as entification, that is, making messy, diverse and ever-changing arrangements look like preexisting or even natural entities—for example, as an individual with clearly demarcated (body) boundaries with a stable, consistent identity. For ethnographic research informed by new materialism, this implies asking the following question: How does it entify? How, when, where and why does the rider become a rider (when they sign up for a class, put on their riding boots or get on the horse?), the horse a horse, the parkours a parkours . . . ? This, new materialism argues, is effected through boundary-making practices and intra-actions.

Process Ontology and the Focus on Boundary-Making Practices and Intra-Actions

As we have outlined previously, a new materialist process ontology implies that the researcher, at first, also does not need to foreground any entity in the field of equestrianism. Of course, researchers may recognise boundaries and hierarchies, and, being a part of the world themselves, they are entangled with these boundaries and hierarchies, but this perspective also frees the researcher from the task of defining or anticipating focus entities within the field. Researchers enter the differentiation process of a field at a specific place and time, and their becoming in the field eventually leads to many things, such as their transformation as a researcher or a written ethnography. In this process, researchers often become those who document the field in various ways. These documentation processes can produce durable boundaries and entities that remain stable for shorter or longer times and can have shifting boundaries at the same time.

The ethnographic practice of observing, however, is not defined as a process of perceiving through human senses, but as a process of transformation of the researcher as a subject with knowledge of the field. By becoming a part of the differentiation processes of the research field, through the intra-action with the field, knowledge is formed and the researcher is configured as an entity who is able to have and work with this knowledge. Hence, there are no predefined pathways on how the knowledge on a specific topic enters the researcher. Empirically we are then able to experience several diverging boundaries all at once. Concerning our example, one might see the boundaries between the horse, the human and the riding clothes. Experienced horseback riders might see even more. If we look at a picture of a horseback rider and quickly tag (Schadler, 2019) the boundaries that come to mind first, we might see a

human, a horse, riding clothes, a hat and an open field with some trees in the background. We might also see a proud rider. The authors of this chapter have no knowledge of equestrain sports, so we cannot know anything specific to the sport that might catch another rider's 'eye' immediately. However, a second, deeper look at latent material-discursive processes referenced (Schadler, 2019) in this picture might also reduce the human, the horse and the clothes to the figure of the horseback rider, where all the entities together create this figure. One could reference differentiation processes of horses and humans and how the relationship of these two entities enfolded and how, for some time at some places in the world, horses and humans developed together, so that their species are highly entangled. There is the development of horseback riding as a sport, the development of rules and clothes for the sport, and the production of all these entities. We might write chapters or ethnographies on these processes. The look at specific riding clothes, their meaning, their substance, their production and place in the world might then disentangle an entity from the rider. A riding trouser might become a very specific thing with its own genealogy and subjective story entangled with many other processes of the world. Reconfiguring and rehierarchising the picture by focusing on a specific entity with its context and referencing its processes of history, the production of status and the 'things' it says when attached to a human on a horse. This could be another ethnography written in entanglement with this picture. Another set of latent material-discursive processes referenced in this picture might be the relations of horses and landscapes and the entanglement of horses and riding grounds. To research these would also provide us with a different ethnography on horseback riding. In all three of these examples of possible ethnographies (which are entangled in a picture of a horseback rider), the picture has different boundaries and different meanings. And so do the human, the horse and the clothes in these three potential ethnographies. They remain the entities of the picture, and yet they are reconfigured with distinguishable boundaries.

Silhouettes Analysis as a New Materialist Ethnography of Movement

An ethnography of movement focuses on riding as an activity or a doing. Thereby, a researcher can choose between at least two ways of analysis. A human-centred perspective focuses on riding as a movement of a human on the back of an animal or a horse and a combination of sitting, body language and mental training. A new materialist understanding of riding instead shifts the focus from the human who is doing something with a horse to the material-discursive practices through which riding as an intra-active becoming is reconfigured in an apparatus of observation. This understanding assumes that entities, such as human and animal, do not preexist but instead are differentiated as entities with meanings in material-discursive practices. The silhouettes analysis method (Höppner, 2022a, 2022b) helps analyse image details as empirical data for such a new materialist ethnography. Doing so, image details

are transformed into silhouettes in several steps, that is, as black formations on a light background.

Referring to Karen Barad's agential realism (2003, 2007), silhouettes show spatially limited formations that are inseparably connected to their surroundings but are separated by agential cuts from these surroundings for analytical purposes. Barad (2003, p. 815) uses the term 'agential cut' in contrast to the Cartesian cut, which Barad defines as an inherent distinction between the subject and the object. Agential cuts enact 'a local resolution within the phenomenon of the inherent ontological indeterminacy' and thus effect a form of *relata* that is produced only through 'agential separability—the local condition of exteriority-within-phenomena' (Barad, 2003, p. 815). One central difference to classical image analysis is that the researcher does not take for granted and reproduce the dualism of human/nonhuman by examining predetermined entities such as a person or an animal in a silhouettes analysis. Instead, the researcher distinguishes formations or matterings—as Barad (2007) calls them in her later works—from their surroundings by using moving/not-moving as the principle of differentiation. In other words, the matterings that move at the moment when a picture is taken are transferred into silhouettes and used as data for analysis. Here, Barad's point that the idea of agential cuts does not assume that dualisms are dissolved is important since continual reconfigurings of the natural–cultural world produce ongoing differentiations (cf. Barad, 2007). However, Barad feels the need to reflect on the principle by which an agential cut is performed and whether it is possible to gain new knowledge if distinctions other than the standard ones are used.

A silhouettes analysis is carried out in two steps. In the first step, the researcher describes the shape of a silhouette to better understand the matterings that constitute a phenomenon such as riding. This step is helpful because silhouettes do not reveal known formations of a phenomenon by means of Cartesian cuts; rather they make unusual formations visible by means of agential cuts. To describe the shape of a silhouette, the use of optical elements of image analysis is helpful, such as lines, sizes, areas and proportions (Prosser, 2011). In a second step, the researcher draws conclusions from the descriptive analysis and examines the properties with which these matterings are provided. Both steps are presented hereunder.

The analysis of the single silhouette reveals that the silhouette forms a large, connected unit. The shape consists of an uneven five-sided triangle standing on one edge (see Figure 13.1):

The shape can also be seen as a star standing on two points (see Figure 13.2):

Both shapes—the five-sided triangle and the star—illustrate that the area of the silhouette is largest and most uniform in the middle part; it forms a compact centre. The area is nearly symmetrical on the vertical axis. In the context of sport, this material formation is associated with specific features that are not free from evaluation: The formation appears powerful, strong and stable. The highest corner of the five-sided triangle/the highest point in the star seems to be a combination of the corners/spikes to the left and right of them. It is

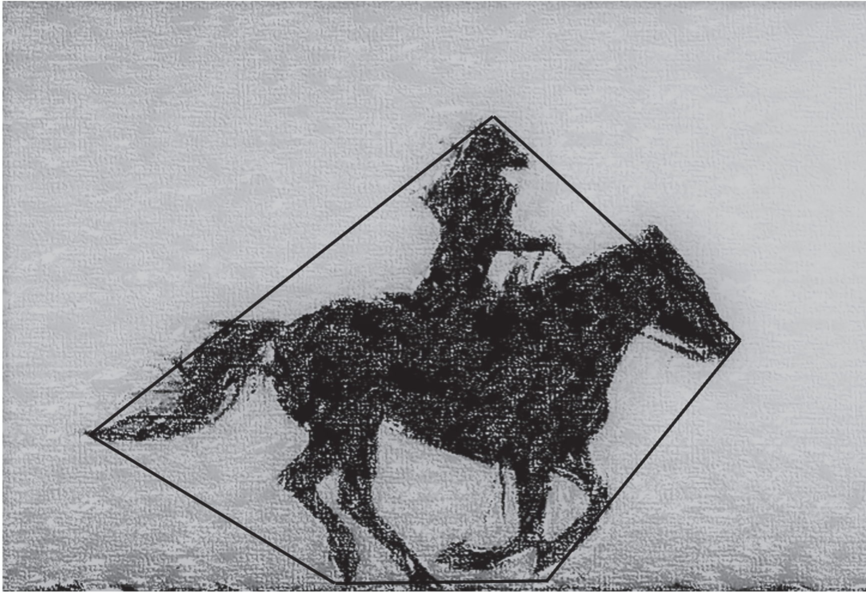

Figure 13.1 Silhouette as an uneven five-sided triangle.

Source: Photograph by the authors

Figure 13.2 Silhouette as a star.

Source: Photograph by the authors

the highest place of the mattering; no other position allows for the same overview. This position is heightened by its material arrangement, and it visualises a hierarchy. If this silhouette were part of a sequence of silhouettes, it would become clear that especially the lower part of the silhouette moves in constant, steady movements, while the middle and upper parts of the silhouette remain comparatively still, though not unmoved. Possibly the balance is tangled there. The material practices of movement are associated with meanings and evaluations: These are dynamic, tense and fast.

The silhouettes analysis demonstrates three things: First, it generates insights into features of the matterings of riding that a classical image analysis would not have revealed. Second, it produces an alienation effect that disturbs typical viewing habits, well-known shapes and their associated presumptions, and thus prevents researchers from seeing something whose representation they are already familiar with. The idea of silhouettes makes it easier to consistently consider the agential cuts made in an analysis and prevents researchers from falling back into human-centred analysis. Making (the properties of) human and nonhuman indeterminate is achievable through the layout of the silhouettes: Colour schemes, textures of materiality, designs and shapes do not allow clear conclusions to be drawn about the entities involved in a formation and thus can stimulate new ways of seeing. And third, silhouettes analysis enables us to learn more about the category of human. Using riding as an example, the analysis shows that human beings are to be understood in relation to other components and that movements such as riding are co-constituted by joint actions; thus, riding would not be possible if human beings were left to their own devices. Against this background, human-centeredness, which is still widespread even in ethnography, can be problematised. All three aspects can stimulate ethnographic research that aims to analyse the material world.

What's New?! The Multifold Ethnographies on Equestrianism

With this chapter, we want to sensitise the readers to what the abolition of classical dualisms and the questioning of boundaries and entities means for educational ethnography. Therefore, we introduced core concepts of new materialisms and showed the methodological implications by taking the example of equestrianism. We clarify that new materialist ethnographies are about the many ethnographies that could be written on a specific field. All those ethnographies unify two shifts in perspective: the shift from human actions to material and discursive practices, and the shift from material and discursive practices to material-discursive practices. In line with this, ethnographers are a part of solid entities in the very processes that we call ethnographic research; we are configured as many entities at once, and our task could be to write those manifold and diverging stories. Not just for fun or because we can but also because this might illustrate the multifold reality in which we live and where one entity can have many boundaries and can be many things simultaneously and nevertheless be a specific thing we recognise. If we identify this

complex entanglement of our world, we have to find theories and methods that enable us to talk about this complication in a less reductionist way. Process ontological thinking and new materialist ethnographies could provide us with modes of research that open up the 'spaces of possibilities' (Barad, 2007) when encountering a part of our world in research. Aside from horseback riding, for the field of education and educational ethnography, this implies that learning processes are not causal situations where a sender (teacher, book) is trying to bring something to the attention of a receiver (pupil, teacher), but that educational processes have to be perceived as extremely multifold, relational and situational. This should no longer come as a surprise for many educational scholars. However, new materialist ethnographies take us one step further in framing learning as a process of transformation for *all* participating entities. This does not mean that a chair can learn a new language, but that the entities of learning are all-transforming within a material-discursive process that defines each other one as a learning or teaching entity, and where the boundaries thereof are redefined within the situation (Ceder, 2018). New materialist pedagogical ethnographies suggest including classrooms and architecture in the curricula and learning methods (Ashton et al., 2020), which become one part of a complex web of biographies, connections, objects and material conditions that enable learning environments (Kotzé et al., 2016). Besides the reassessment of educational processes, new materialisms may also influence the contents of a class, as they may allow students to reconsider their learned perceptions of nature and nurture (Nelson et al., 2021) and boundaries between species (Aslanian & Rigmor Moxnes, 2020).

To overcome known seeing and thinking habits, new materialist ethnographies are helpful because they enable us to irritate and reflect our own perceptions and ways of understanding. Encouraged by Pink (2001, p. 4), who states that researchers should create new methodologies and methods rather than attaching 'the visual to existing methodological principles and analytical frames', the methodologies and methods introduced in this chapter enable researchers to gain a better understanding of the material-discursive practices and elements that are not predefined but instead are configured during the research process. In the sense that Hirschauer und Amann (1997) aim to alienate our own culture and identify the discovery as the main principle of ethnography, we explore these ideas in this chapter: We contribute to the alienation of our perception and ways of knowing by discovering something different from what we typically see when we think we know what a thing looks like.

References

Ashton, E. J., Mah, K. W., & Rivers, P. L. (2020). Spatialising the curriculum. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, *52*(2), 177–194. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2019.1657956

Aslanian, T. K., & Moxnes, A. R. (2020). Making "cuts" with a Holstein cow in early childhood education and care: The joys of representation. *Journal of Childhood Studies*, 53–66. https://doi.org/10.18357/jcs452202019739

Atkinson, P. (2010). *Handbook of ethnography*. SAGE.
Barad, K. (2003). Posthumanist performativity. *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *28*(3), 801–831.
Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the universe halfway*. Duke University Press.
Bennett, T., & Joyce, P. (2010). *Material powers: Cultural studies, history and the material turn*. Routledge.
Bollig, S., Honig, M.-S., Neumann, S., & Seele, C. (2015). The multiple geographies of early childhood education and care. In *MultiPluriTrans in educational ethnography*. Transcript. (pp. 99–118).
Braidotti, R. (2006). Posthuman, all too human: Towards a new process ontology. *Theory, Culture & Society*, *23*(7–8), 197–208. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276406069232
Ceder, S. (2018). *Towards a posthuman theory of educational relationality*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351044196
Dashper, K. (2016). Strong, active women: (Re)doing rural femininity through equestrian sport and leisure. *Ethnography*, *17*(3), 350–368.
Delamont, S. (2013). *Key themes in the ethnography of education*. SAGE.
Dolphijn, R., & van der Tuin, I. (2012). *New materialism interviews & cartographies*. Open Humanities Press. http://openhumanitiespress.org/new-materialism.html
Endenburg, N. (1999). Perceptions and attitudes towards horses in European societies. *Equine Veterinary Journal*, *31*(S28), 38–41. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2042-3306.1999.tb05154.x
Fredriksen, B. C. (2019). Interspecies pedagogy: What could a horse teach me about teaching? *TRACE—Journal for Human-Animal Studies*, *5*, 4–30. https://doi.org/10.23984/fjhas.78122
Haraway, D. (2010). When species meet: Staying with the trouble. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, *28*(1), 53–55. https://doi.org/10.1068/d2706wsh
Hays, S. (1994). Structure and agency and the sticky problem of culture. *Sociological Theory*, *12*(1), 57–72. https://doi.org/10.2307/202035
Hirschauer, S., & Amann, K. (Eds.). (1997). *Die Befremdung der eigenen Kultur*. Suhrkamp.
Höppner, G. (2022a). Alter(n) als materiell-diskursive Praxis: Wie ein Barad'sches Verständnis von Alter(n) die Diskursforschung bereichern kann. *Zeitschrift für Diskursforschung*, *2*, 310–329.
Höppner, G. (2022b). Silhouettes analysis: A posthuman method for visualizing and examining the material world. *Qualitative Research*, *22*(4), 578–593. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794121999015
Hui, A., Schatzki, T. R., & Shove, E. (Eds.). (2017). *The nexus of practices*. Routledge.
Jones McVey, R. (2021). An ethnographic account of the British equestrian virtue of bravery, and its implications for equine welfare. *Animals*, *11*(1), 188. https://doi.org/10.3390/ani11010188
Kotzé, E., Crocket, K., & Waititi (Ngāti Porou), C. (2016). Meeting the Wharenui shapes teaching/learning therapy: Place pedagogy, new materialism, and Whakaaro Māori. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy*, *37*(3), 317–326. https://doi.org/10.1002/anzf.1172
Layder, D. (2014). *Structure, interaction and social theory*. Routledge.
McVey, R. J. (2022). Seeking contact: British horsemanship and stances toward knowing and being known by (animal) others. *Ethos*, *50*(4), 465–479. https://doi.org/10.1111/etho.12371
Mills, D., & Morton, M. (2013). *Ethnography in education*. SAGE.
Mol, A. (2002). *The body multiple: Ontology in medical practice*. Duke University Press.
Nelson, P. M., Segall, A., & Scott Durham, B. (2021). Between aspiration and reality: New materialism and social studies education. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, 1–28. https://doi.org/10.1080/00933104.2021.1912679

Nicolini, D. (2009). Zooming in and out: Studying practices by switching theoretical lenses and trailing connections. *Organization Studies*, *30*(12), 1391–1418. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840609349875
Nicolini, D. (2017). Is small the only beautiful? Making sense of 'large phenomena' from a practice-based perspective. In A. Hui, T. R. Schatzki, & E. Shove (Eds.), *The nexus of practices*. Routledge.
Paul, D. B. (1998). *The politics of heredity: Essays on eugenics, biomedicine, and the nature-nurture debate*. State University of New York Press.
Pink, S. (2001). *Doing visual ethnography*. SAGE.
Prosser, J. (2011). Visual methodology. Toward a more seeing research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 479–496). SAGE.
Reckwitz, A. (2006). *Das hybride Subjekt*. Suhrkamp.
Röhl, T. (2013). *Dinge des Wissens: Schulunterricht als sozio-materielle Praxis*. Lucius & Lucius.
Schadler, C. (2019). Enactments of a new materialist ethnography: Methodological framework and research processes. *Qualitative Research*, *19*(2), 215–230. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794117748877
Schatzki, T. R. (1996). *Social practices: A Wittgensteinian approach to human activity and the social*. Cambridge University Press.
Schatzki, T. (2010). Materiality and social life. *Nature and Culture*, *5*(2). https://doi.org/10.3167/nc.2010.050202
Schatzki, T. R. (2017). Sayings, texts, and discursive formations. In A. Hui, T. R. Schatzki, & E. Shove (Eds.), *The nexus of practices: Connections, constellations and practitioners* (1st ed., pp. 126–140). Routledge.
Shove, E., Pantzar, M., & Watson, M. (2012). *The dynamics of social practice: Everyday life and how it changes*. SAGE.
Wrana, D., & Langer, A. (2017). An den Rändern der Diskurse. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung*, *8*(2).

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

Part III

Empirical Perspectives

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

14 Introductory Reflections on the New in Empirical Analyses

Anke Wischmann

The New in Empirical Analyses

To see things, living beings and situations differently, as indeed to read and understand stories or artefacts means to recognise the relationality, situatedness and positionality of knowledge and practices. When we conduct research, we do it in a particular way, in a certain space and time and from a specific perspective. Hence, new approaches and new findings are dependent on the way we do, that is, design, theoretically frame, conduct, interpret and disseminate our research. This final section includes different options to empirically rethink and redo what is new. The core question is as follows: What can we do to capture the new in empirical studies?

When entering a field in educational practice or with educational ambitions, the focus often is not on what is actually new and/or can be understood, seen, heard or felt in a new way, but on the question of how we can do better. Hence, the logic of competitivity and an (economically valued) outcome leads us to think about the optimisation of education and not about what is actually happening and how we could do research (in a different way) to adapt to it. Of course, ethnographic research—not only in education—already claims to reject this perspective (Thomas, 1991), yet still, the framings of educational expectations for research found in this very field also frame ethnographic approaches. 'What is the benefit?' seems to be the crucial question and one that is uppermost, especially in the reasoning for research funding.

Basically, there is always a 'risk of failure' (Verbuyst & Galazka, 2023), which indicates the (unavoidable) problem of being situated in a certain way as, for example, white, female, Western European, academic researcher with their bias. As pointed out elsewhere (Wischmann, 2020), the consideration of our own perspective is both necessary and uncomfortable because we need to expose ourselves. When researchers observe others or even the 'Other' (Said, 1994), the radical questioning of who we are and how we are become related to the Other. Hence, this relatedness needs to become an issue in itself. This concerns the construction of the research subject (what am I researching and why?), the choice of methods and then how these methods are applied in the field. In the following section, the authors reveal how they enter the field

DOI: 10.4324/9781032629384-18

This chapter has been made available under a (CC-BY-NC-ND) 4.0 license.

or even how they become part of the field and develop different perspectives from different angles: They move into the field and within the field. In both autoethnographic and ethnographic research, the researcher is part of the empirical subject, which needs to be reflected upon and become part of any theoretisations.

The striking insight from this way of conducting ethnographic research in education is the inevitably critical perspective that arises and sheds light on aspects of realities hidden, unseen and unheard up to now (e.g., such as children's worlds, digital adolescent spaces or postsocialistic socialisation experiences and trajectories).

> The perspective of critique, in his view, is able to call foundations into question, denaturalize social and political hierarchy, and even establish perspectives by which a certain distance on the naturalized world can be had. But none of these activities can tell us in what direction we ought to move, nor can they tell us whether the activities in which we engage are realizing certain kinds of normatively justified goals. Hence, in his view, critical theory had to give way to a stronger normative theory, such as communicative action, in order to supply a foundation for critical theory, enabling strong normative judgments to be made (Benhabib, 1986), and for politics not only to have a clear aim and normative aspiration, but for us to be able to evaluate current practices in terms of their abilities to reach those goals.
>
> (Butler, 2001, n.p.)

In accordance with this, the chapters in this section are conducting empirical research in the form of ethnography while also undertaking a critique. And this critique of ethnography arises from the moment of the Other. The Other makes demands, the ethnographer tries to grasp the Other and thus they go outside their regular normative order and even do things that are disapproved of 'at home'; moreover, the ethnographer translates this into their own. They might then see the familiar in a different way. The criticism lies in the realisation of differences. The critique here is not merely aiming to problematise existing grievances but also to transform research itself and create something new meanwhile. This corresponds to a postcritical approach that not only marks deficiencies, but instead opens perspectives (Hodgson et al., 2018).

References

Benhabib, S. (1986). *Critique, norm, and utopia: A study of the foundations of critical theory.* Columbia University Press.

Butler, J. (2001). *What is critique? An essay on Foucault's virtue.* https://transversal.at/transversal/0806/butler/en

Hodgson, N., Vlieghe, J., & Zamojski, P. (2018). *Manifesto for a post-critical pedagogy.* punctum books. https://doi.org/10.21983/P3.0193.1.00

Said, E. W. (1994). *Orientalism.* Random House.

Thomas, N. (1991). Against ethnography. *Cultural Anthropology*, *6*(3), 306–322.
Verbuyst, R., & Galazka, A. M. (2023). Introducing 'navigating failure in ethnography': A forum about failure in ethnographic research. *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, *12*(1), 61–75. https://doi.org/10.1108/JOE-10-2022-0027
Wischmann, A. (2020). 'Entschuldigung, aber Sie sind ja auch weiß.' Probleme rassismuskritischer Lehre aus weißer Perspektive. In C. Bünger & A. Czejkowska (Eds.), *Political Correctness und pädagogische Kritik. Einleitende Bemerkungen* (pp. 135–147). Peter Lang Academic. https://doi.org/10.3726/JP012018k_135

15 Autoethnographic Explorations of (Post-)Socialist Childhood Memories Through Storytelling

Migrating as and With Children

Irena Kašparová and Susanne Ress

Introduction

In its diverse forms, migrating (whether forced or not) forges new connections within and across individuals, families and communities, between home, school and public spheres, offering manifold opportunities for learning and identification, however ruptured. Shilpi Gupta (Gupta, 2019) speaks of 'imagined homelands' as materially and metaphorically constructed spaces of transnational un/belonging. Pauliina Alenius (2015) highlights migration as 'transnational spaces of learning' (Alenius, 2015, p. 18). Migrating is shaped by ambiguous experiences, positive and negative, especially for children (Gardner, 2012), which are not easily remembered or shared in words. In education, the literature concerned with migration often focuses on language, integration or *othering* processes (cf. Dirim & Mecheril, 2018; Scheunpflug & Affolderbach, 2019; Hummrich & Terstegen, 2020). In this chapter, we add to these accounts from the perspective of our memories of migrating as and with children. We also explore how these memories continue oozing into our existences and identities today, emphasising the mundaneness of 'ordinary affects' (Stewart, 2007) in the otherwise 'big' experience of physical, cognitive, emotional and other forms of dis- and relocation/dis- and reconnection in the wake of the Cold War.

Since the early 1990s, we (an anthropologist and an education researcher) have migrated repeatedly as and with children across Europe, Asia and North America. At times, rather than us moving physically, the political realities around us changed. We count these changes among our experiences in as much as they have yielded sensations of alienation akin to migratory experiences and because we remember them as being unexplainable when we were children. In our narratives, and subsequently in this chapter, we uphold the notion that borders and stories are not one-off events, pinned with the proverbial needle in space and time. Rather, we consider them to be transcending, fluid reoccurrences that come and go, always present to some extent while being unavailable for easy realisation. Borders and stories, pain and pleasures all the same, manifest themselves as what Gloria Anzaldúa (Anzaldúa, 1987)

DOI: 10.4324/9781032629384-19

This chapter has been made available under a (CC-BY-NC-ND) 4.0 license.

has described as the shadowy spaces of borderlands that we inhabit and that inhabit us:

> Living on borders and in margins, keeping intact one's shifting and multiple identity and integrity, is like trying to swim in a new element, an 'alien' element. There is an exhilaration in being a participant in the further evolution of humankind, in being 'worked' on. I have the sense that certain 'faculties'—not just in me, but in every border resident, coloured or non-coloured—and dormant areas of consciousness are being activated, awakened. Strange, huh? And yes, the 'alien' element has become familiar—never comfortable, not with society's clamour to uphold the old, to rejoin the flock, to go with the herd. No, not comfortable but home.
>
> (Anzaldúa, 1987, preface)

In this chapter, we reflect on the conduciveness of seemingly nonscientific, artistic methods, like collage making or creative writing, when coping with disruptive life experiences such as migration that otherwise are too complex and inaccessible by single streams of rationally ordered words.

Narrating Collective Memories of Migration

Notes on Migration

People and nations have been on the move since the dawn of age. (Modern) life is about movement (Cresswell, 2006; Ingold, 2015). Not surprisingly, social sciences have dedicated substantial attention to topics related to travel and migration, for instance, legitimate or illegitimate movements and belonging (Gonzales, 2016), right to transnational self-determination (cf. Mecheril, 2020), values assigned to mobility (cf. Ress, 2023), female migration (Mahler & Pessar, 2006) and the construction of transnational family experiences (cf. Boehm, 2008; Boccagni, 2012; Reimers, 2018). Anthropological perspectives conceptualise migration as a heterogeneous process, where the wellbeing of families and future generations is almost always named as the main reason for migration. Multisited ethnography as a research method has allowed for the observation of migrant networks in countries of origin and arrival (Gallo, 2016). It has shown that second-generation and/or migrant children create their identities with memories from both sides of the border (Punch, 2012). Migrating individuals, families and communities often consider themselves to be transnational, transcultural, 'travellers' or global citizens (McHugh, 2000; Punch, 2012). Ethnographers have recognised these well-known processes of self-identification as bricolage identity (Lévi-Strauss, 1966), which involves manipulating identity (and/or ethnicity) in relation to contexts and audiences (Sutherland, 1986), while drawing upon symbols and performances to create connections with similarly minded communities (Alexander et al., 2006).

Autoethnography and Collective Biography

Autoethnography has been widely used in academic research across disciplines over the last two decades to acknowledge the reflexive turn, the twist in ethnography, which considers the production of knowledge as an outcome of contexts of which researchers themselves are part (Chang, 2016). It acknowledges power dynamics and asymmetries in ethnographic research by including researchers' experiences, especially in the collective form (Lapadat, 2017). The researcher becomes a respondent, narrating personal and collective memories, as well as embodied practices (McNamara, 2009; van Hulst, 2020). Autoethnography builds on written documentations, such as diaries, letters, emails and social media; visual and oral material, such as photos, videos and interviews with contemporary witnesses; physical realities, such as landscape, statues, museums and architecture; and numerous secondary sources, including public records, chronicles, laws and legal documents. The materials are gathered, coded, clustered and analysed as representations of ideas and actions typical for specific social and historical contexts beyond individual stories (Jones et al., 2016). We have used autoethnography as a practice of self-reflexivity and shared reflections (Lapadat, 2017) to examine personal childhood memories of being strangers in unknown circumstances and (rapidly/repeatedly) changing contexts. A collective biography engages a group of researchers in the 'shared work of telling, listening and writing' (Davies & Gannon, 2006, p. 3) to move below the surface of usual explanations and instead make them into 'an embodied sense of what happened' (Davies & Gannon, 2006). This research method takes personal stories and transforms them into episodes that can be related to collectively. It builds on the assumption that individual experiences in their mundane emotionality can be unravelled only in collective systems of meaning. The chapter foregrounds the collective practice of narrating memories into existence by relying on unpredictability and fluid situatedness as innate characteristics of ethnographic encounters; collectively unearthing and weaving together memories as reflections across different personae as children, parents, researchers and educators.

Storytelling

Storytelling is a method widely used in human communication (Mandelbaum, 2012). People tell themselves and each other stories, describing minor episodes and events of their personal lives, as well as grand narratives to set a context for collectively shared actions and/or beliefs (Bruner, 1997). The many stories are the claws that catch hold of and thus contribute to building up both personal and collective narratives. Moreover, humans (re-)negotiate the meaning of experiences and events through stories, fictional and otherwise (van Hulst, 2020). The process of storytelling is constructive. It builds upon and integrates past and present experiences, as well as related emotionality.

This chapter's understanding of emotionality follows Kathleen Stewart's description of ordinary affects (2007):

> The ordinary is a shifting assemblage of practice and practical knowledge, a scene of both liveness and exhaustion, a dream of escape or of the simple life. Ordinary affects are the varied, surging capacities to affect and to be affected that give everyday life the quality of a continual motion of relations, scenes, contingencies, and emergences. They're things that happen. They happen in impulses, sensations, expectations, daydreams, encounters, and habits of relating, in strategies and their failures, in forms of persuasion, contagion, and compulsion, in modes of attention, attachment, and agency, and in publics and social worlds of all kinds that catch people up in something that feels like *some*thing.
>
> (Stewart, 2007, pp. 1–2, italics in original)

Memories blend into shared episodes, representing the bricks that build identities (Georges, 1969; Mattingly et al., 2002). In storytelling, much is envisioned rather than understood: a method of self-expression that takes away the pressure of objectivity or reason. It accords space to disruptions, inconsistencies and fragility borne by everyday emotionality. Collective story sharing takes

> [T]he listening to the details of each other's memories, as a technology for enabling us to produce, through the attention to the embodied sense of being in the remembered moment, a truth in relation to what cannot actually be recovered—the moment as it was lived.
>
> (Davies & Gannon, 2006, p. 4)

Storytellers weave the mythemes of stories in such a manner that the audience can relate to them. This is achieved in two ways: through joint understandings or shared experience. While the former indicates a shared mode of thoughts and common value system as abstract engagements (Niles, 1999), the latter connotes shared bodily engagements between tellers and listeners (Gonick & Gannon, 2013) that create connection and deepens social ties. As such, storytelling engenders a sense of belonging, a vital ingredient for any community or even society and nation.

In this chapter, we share the two artistic approaches that we practiced as part of our autoethnographic, collective explorations of memories—collage making and creative writing. They are artistic expressions of lived stories of migration with and as children. Both of the stories emerged from an initiative to collect childhood memories from our socialist past so as to multiply and diversify narratives about socialism otherwise narrowly defined by political ideologies or ideas of the end of history (Silova et al., 2018). In an effort to weave a web of stories, this initiative culminated in a conference entitled 'Spinning the sticky threads of childhood memories: From Cold War to Anthropocene',

held in the autumn of 2021, together with a growing memory archive.[1] Both stories arose from differing modes of artistic engagements in preparation for this conference. By sharing them, we are also sharing our belief that collaborative, artistic and evocative engagements hold the potential for considering connections between migration and learning anew.

Berlin | Being | Home

This collage was enabled by a moment of liberty from academic standards in preparation for the aforementioned conference when the organisers explicitly invited scholarly and/or artistic contributions. Engaging in memory recollection was not something I was able to do consciously or in a scholarly fashion. This would have required a reading of my experiences against existing scientific and/or political discourses. Either one would have had preassigned meanings, foreclosing what the story was before I knew it. While settling on the 'research question' (Why Berlin felt more like home than other places?) and the artistic approach (collage, see Figure 15.1) was relatively easy, I struggled most with conveying the ever-present qualities of memories as life-directing happenings. The collage ultimately emerged from a series of conversations with my mother (shown in her 20s), pictures from my personal archive and

Figure 15.1 Berlin | Being | Home (Photo collage).

Source: Author

photographed family ventures into the city. The collage interweaves past and recent memories, combining multiple layers of photos (e.g., research in Brazil; Angela Davis and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak on stage; the Marzahn district in Berlin, where I lived as a child from 1984 to 1988), representing moments in which my socialist childhood manifested itself as fragments in the present, yet connected by belonging to a cultural space that has lost its credibility in official narratives.

Born in 1977 near Dresden, a central German city with many histories located in Saxony. 'Die Wende' (fall of the Berlin Wall and German reunification) is comprised of few vivid memories. Sitting with a friend on the roof of a shed. Wearing a black bubble skirt, a day or two after she got her period for the first time. An exciting time for a girl, 11 years old, which resulted in thick pads nestling uncomfortably between her legs and teasing comments from schoolmates. Images of people during the news broadcast on TV, gathered in masses before embassies, storming and climbing fences. Horrid rumours of baby carriages placed in front of trains to prevent them from exiting the station. Asking why people wanted to leave. Don't they have everything they need? Answer: Their families have been separated. Her parents hastily leaving town, taking the children to their grandparents' house in the countryside because they feared for the family's safety. A well-meaning neighbour warned them of potential threats because of the father's position in the military. Waiting in a line of cars, queuing to cross the recently opened border, parking on a field, and walking, in moon boots with worn soles, into a small Bavarian town together with many others. West-German money spent on a Barbie doll that would become the canvas for many sewing projects. She was a young pioneer, attending weekly assemblies: 'Für Frieden und Sozialimus, seid bereit! Immer bereit!' She served as representative of her class, danced at the opening ceremony of the nationwide pioneer gathering in Karl-Marx-Stadt (now Chemnitz) in 1988, collected wastepaper and empty bottles for good causes, and spent many weekends and vacations in the Sächsische Schweiz, a mid-size mountain range in the south of Saxony, climbing, hiking and swimming in small streams. Her family was part of a group of 'sworn comrades', always looking out for each other in solidarity, although this was difficult during the years filled with mistrust and uncertainty as the country transitioned from one political system to the next. It took her six years (until 1994) to discover the liberty of tampons, secretly from her cousin, preparing for 10 months as an exchange student in Portugal, a country she had to look up on the map. Later she found out that her dad's maternal grandmother and aunt lived in Konstanz and Switzerland. The family had met in secret for years so as not to compromise her grandfather's position with the police force. But there had always been the legendary packages at Christmas filled with the notorious chocolate and coffee.

Somehow, I can never fully remember the years in which all of this took place, usually reconstructing the timeline with help from the internet. Most of the things 'I know' from my childhood have been learned as an adult from movies, books and museums. My 'memories' are scattered, a tapestry of pieced-together images, ideas and feelings. Fragments that surface unexpectedly. Sometimes I conjure them up consciously and sometimes they (unconsciously) drive my actions. For instance, when I settled on a topic for my dissertation, it was Brazil's claim for solidarity that stirred my interest in south-south cooperations. During the research, I had to discard the understanding of solidarity rooted in my childhood, especially in feelings of belonging to a group that looked out for each other. I have lived in many places around the world, Dresden, Almada, Bergen, Würzburg, Munich, Bharatpur, Karlsruhe, Inhambane, Madison, Redenção, Bamberg and Berlin, incorporating many new elements into the tapestry of my memories over the years. Berlin feels like a very good representation of this tapestry, weaving together fragments. It feels like home because it combines fragments rather than forcing me to choose between them.

The collage shows fragments from my socialist childhood as they resurface throughout my life. Themes that reveal themselves as connections between seemingly unconnected contexts. The question of why Berlin feels like home finds answers in the circumstance that Berlin does not make me choose or adapt. I experienced pressures to (culturally) adapt during my traineeship in Würzburg, as a young professional in Munich, and now again as a postdoctoral researcher in Bamberg, which make me uncomfortable. What is curious to me is that the feeling of having to adapt as something negative seems more acute in Germany than in other places. Perhaps because there, I am a stranger in ways that coincide less with German–German history. On the contrary, a postcolonial seminar in Madison made me realise why I found frequent efforts to identify me as 'German' irritating. I had no idea what it meant. Instead, I began to mock such efforts of identification by responding with, 'I am a communist', which over time grew into personal musings about 'being of socialist descent' as a cultural category. Something is missing from official accounts that construe 'Ostdeutsche' or East Germans as the 'internal other' (alongside other minorities) of reunited Germany (cf. Foroutan et al., 2019) and that gloss over the many ways in which my childhood has contributed to who I am today.

Creating Storytelling: Seeking What Lasts in the Changing World

This story is a memory abstracted and analysed from my diary specifically for this chapter, using the autoethnographic approach described earlier. Being a social anthropologist, I work frequently with storytelling as a means to express relations, connections, emotions and meanings, including those which are not easily said out loud. Stories work as metaphors for life situations, as well as for its illustrations and verbal analogies of mind maps. They are halfway

between the artistic freedom of expression and interpretation at one end and academic knowledge or observable facts at the other. As such, storytelling permits remarkably full individual self-expression. At the same time, storytelling is a dialectical process, where the author of the story engages with their readers and listeners. Interaction is conveyed through not only shared symbols—words, themes and actions—but also senses and feelings. Each one of them, alone or in combination, has a potency to arouse mutual connections or even understandings between the storyteller and their audience, thus bridging a gap among worlds, cultures, professions, modes of reasoning, value systems or even time.

Ever since she[2] could remember, she was a traveller and a reader. She took after her father. When he was a young man, he wanted to travel with a circus as an artist. He loved the movement of human bodies and visiting new places. When he became a pastor later on in his life, he read a lot of interesting books and, surprisingly, he travelled a lot too. This took place under state socialism, where the church was controlled by the state and the church ministers were employees of the state. Pastors, the servants of the 'opium of the masses', were observed and spied on closely for any anti-state actions or words, and their families were shuffled around the country's border zones at the state's will in order for them not to put down roots too deeply. The family moved four times prior to her 16th birthday, spending four years, on average, in each town. Farewell to friends, farewell to social bonds, land ties, new schools, and farewell to trees they had planted in their temporary gardens. Rarely did they stay long enough to pick their first fruits. Nomadism was their way of life, and all the other pastors' families lived that way, just like the circus people. When you live like a traveller, there is never really such a thing as distance since the final destination is not an issue. What matters is the experience of the temporality of both time and space, evoking the unconscious certainty that nothing lasts forever, be it good or evil—just like state socialism.

Moving around children in their teens is a life-shattering activity. They make a huge effort to fit into new schools, gain new friends and establish themselves in sports or other after-school activities. Then, just when they are starting to get along and be appreciated for who they are rather than being seen as the 'new arrival'—oh oh—here we go again, another move. In a time with no internet, she only had her literary friends to comfort her in periods of such despair. Their life is—unlike the migrant child's—continuous and complete. Their life has a beginning, an adventurous plot and—especially in the literature for younger children—it ends with 'happy ever after'. She wished for such a life too. She read anything she could, the more adventurous and the more exotic, the better. She made the novel heroes her intimate friends and their lands her own home territories. Through books, she became intimate with African savannas and deserts, Amazonian forests, Sherlock Holmes's London, Wuthering Heights or Vinnetou's prairies.

Her literary friends helped her in her real life too; they served as mutual friends with real-life people each time they arrived at their new temporal-home destination. It is much easier to fit in once you have a mutual friend, even if they are fictional. The more she read, the greater her company. Over the period of her inner-state nomadic childhood, she became an expert in speedy networking, using her literary friends and knowledge to form real-life friendships and establish ties, taking part in amateur theatre, reciting clubs, poetry writing groups and subsequently getting library part-time jobs and volunteering her help. She had to hurry through the initial phase of getting to know each new person since she never knew when it would be time to hit the road again.

When she was 16, a miracle happened and state socialism collapsed. A permanent home and roots finally? Not really—once a nomad, always a nomad, and new directions now opened up for those who had been restricted to wandering around the borders of the Iron Curtain, peeking through it only with the help of travelogues and fiction. Soon after the Velvet Revolution, the family landed in England. A dream and a nightmare at one and the same time. Free to go anywhere you please, but how do you justify your nomadism in a culture that leads a settled life? Free to buy anything you desire and to realise that even in the West, people cannot really have it all. Free to speak your mind, but how when you are not fluent in the native language? How to make friends among people who eat different food, laugh at different jokes, have different life experiences and believe that people in the East are so backward that they do not know what a washing machine is, have never seen snow and still keep their clothes in trunks rather than wardrobes?—to name some stereotypes encountered in the United Kingdom. It felt great to be free; it felt terrible to be alone, or even lonely, in this freedom. All of a sudden, freedom became a relative term.

To live through this period of her life, she did what she knew best: stuck with her family, wrote to her old acquaintances, studied and read—none of which was a favourite pastime of her school peers. In her nostalgia for the times that once were and feeling sorry for her youth slowly passing by while stuck in loneliness, she became particularly fond of the work of Oscar Wilde, especially his fairytales. She was content with the fact that there is no happy ending in them, since in her English exile, as she perceived it by then, she felt betrayed by those she had heard in childhood that did end with a *happy ever after*.

16 June 1993: *I do not remember how it came about that I ended up in my English teacher's living room with a group consisting of a few old ladies, my mother and Emma from our church. It was a session of a storytelling club that my English teacher held once a month. She'd already invited me before, but I never went. Too shy. We drank cheap Tetley tea with semi-skimmed milk, ate oatmeal biscuits, sat around in a circle and somebody challenged me to tell my story. As if in a dream, I could see myself rising up and starting without hesitation: 'She said that she would dance with me if I brought her red roses,' cried the young Student,*

'but in all my garden there is no red rose.' I immersed myself in the words of Oscar Wilde, the tale about the nightingale who was so fond of love that she sacrificed her life at its mere possibility, its mere hint. I was telling the story with all my body. As if in a dream. I did not feel shame, when I did not know the correct words, I just acted them out. I gave the story all my sadness, all my despair, all the downfall I felt. When I finished, there was silence in the living room, then—after a while—a huge applause. It felt like a movie scene—the audience goes mad while the protagonist awakens from the role she acted in and realises what has happened. (chapter author's original diary)

That afternoon, nobody questioned in what way *The Nightingale and the Rose* was her story. Neither did she become a storyteller, nor a permanent member of the storytelling club, nor an 'A' English student. And she has not yet returned to the Czech Republic. Still, something changed dramatically in her disintegrating life, scattered between two states, two regimes and two childhoods. She regained herself again. The occasion gave her a voice, the storytelling club their attention and acknowledgement, and the story an opportunity to express the happy and sad, good and bad, and the unresolved and unresolvable inside of her. She felt as if she was once more a part of the world she knew well, she felt complete and she felt content. To remember this, she has kept Wilde's fairy tales in her bedside library ever since.

Conclusion

Feeling out of place, belonging and, at the same time, standing apart, anger, despair, integrating, wanting to be different, feeling different, wanting to blend in, rebelling, provoking, manipulating, borders erected and borders destroyed. These are just a few commonalities between the two stories above. What makes the two stories relate to each other are not individual experiences or affects, but rather the numerous tensions and contradictions that accompany the lived-out experience of migrating—in and out; loved and hated; provoking and provoked; and being the same and being different—all at the same time.

In this chapter, we have shared our approach to illuminating these elusive and fragmented selves. Both stories emerged from collective, autoethnographic and biographic engagements with childhood memories of migration as and with children in late and postsocialism. Without the group of scholars and artists working collectively on (post-)socialist childhood and schooling, without the invitation to participate in the conference, accompanied by the freedom given in terms of the type of conference contributions, these stories might never have been told because of the missing impetus.

The artistic and evocative engagement afforded an avenue to making sense of otherwise fragmented memories. They allowed us to co-construct meaning beyond individual stories, weaving together a loose collection of 'ordinary affects' as we remember them. Glimpses from an inner world gleaned through diary entries and images in a collage—words conjuring images beyond words—provide communicative channels that engender acceptance

(Hogan & Pink, 2010; Laine, 2020). The stories illustrate our experiences of negotiating belongings within the self and within the 'imagined homeland' of collectively shared experiences of migrating and political dislocation at the end of the 20th century in Europe. Together, they spawn a bigger picture of the disruptions, inconsistencies and fragilities we 'felt' while growing up and still 'feel' occasionally in our adult lives.

We hope that the stories resonate with the experiences of migrating as and with children that others have had. Through them, we suspended, if only temporarily, the exactness of facts, rationality and reason for the possibility of sense-making and solidarity. Learning how to cope with and engage in experiences of alterity flourishes in safe spaces of self-expression, despite their fragmentary and seemingly chaotic disposition. We strongly believe that aesthetic practices like the ones shared here and others (such as comics Weber & Moritzen, 2017) can transform feelings of alienation into belonging and solidarity. They can also translate experiences and concepts across contexts, which may allow learners to de- and recontextualise their own experiences (Mariussen & Virkkala, 2013). Mundane experiences associated with migration are often crowded out by (forced or speedy) adaptations. In education, the gesture of arrival may push 'the before' to inferior positions in children's memories and self-telling of stories (Devine, 2013). Much emphasis is placed upon new and very little upon old ways of life or else upon the constant oscillation between both in borderlands (Anzaldúa, 1987). Joint practices of unearthing memories thus enabling situated learning as the sharedness of geographical, political, cognitive, emotional and otherwise border crossing (Alenius, 2015). Understanding migrating as ongoing, collective negotiations of self and belonging can contribute to the creation of communities of transnational learning (Belbase et al., 2008).

Notes

1 https://coldwarchildhoods.org/.
2 The story is written in the third-person singular, a typical form for a collective biography approach, as described earlier (Davies & Gannon, 2006).

References

Alenius, P. (2015). *Informal learning in a transnational setting: Exploring learning spaces of people migrating between Estonia and Finland*. University of Tampere.

Alexander, J. C., Giesen, B., & Mast, J. L. (Eds.). (2006). *Social performance: Symbolic action, cultural pragmatics, and ritual*. Cambridge University Press.

Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands: La Frontera. The new mestiza*. Aunt Lute Books.

Belbase, S., Luitel, B., & Taylor, P. (2008). Autoethnography: A method of research and teaching for transformative education. *Journal of Education and Research*, *1*(1), 86–95.

Boccagni, P. (2012). Practising motherhood at a distance: Retention and loss in Ecuadorian transnational families. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *38*(2), 261–277.

Boehm, D. A. (2008). 'For my children:' Constructing family and navigating the state in the US-Mexico transnation. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 777–802.

Bruner, E. M. (1997). Ethnography as narrative. In L. P. Hinchman & S. K. Hinchman (Eds.), *Memory, identity, community: The idea of narrative in the human sciences* (pp. 264–280). State University of New York Press.

Chang, H. (2016). *Autoethnography as method*. Routledge.

Cresswell, T. (2006). *On the move: Mobility in the modern western world*. Routledge.

Davies, B., & Gannon, S. (2006). *Doing collective biography*. McGraw-Hill Education.

Devine, D. (2013). 'Value'ing children differently? Migrant children in education. *Children & Society*, *27*(4), 282–294.

Dirim, I., & Mecheril, P. (2018). *Heterogenität, Sprache(n), Bildung. Die Schule der Migrationsgesellschaft*. Klinkhardt/UTB.

Foroutan, N., Kalter, F., Canan, C., & Simon, M. (2019). *Ost-Migrantische Analogien I. Konkurrenz um Anerkennung*. DeZIM-Institut. https://dezim-institut.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Projekte/Ost-Migrantische_Analogien/Ost Mig_Booklet_A4.pdf

Gallo, E. (2016). In the right place at the right time? Reflections on multi-sited ethnography in the age of migration. In M. A. Falzon (Ed.), *Multi-sited ethnography: Theory, praxis and locality in contemporary research* (pp. 87–102). Routledge.

Gardner, K. (2012). Transnational migration and the study of children: An introduction. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *38*(6), 889–912.

Georges, R. A. (1969). Toward an understanding of storytelling events. *The Journal of American Folklore*, *82*(326), 313–328.

Gonick, M., & Gannon, S. (2013). Collective biography: An introduction. *Girlhood Studies*, *6*(1), 7–12.

Gonzales, R. G. (2016). *Lives in limbo: Undocumented and coming of age in America*. University of California Press.

Gupta, S. (2019). Negotiation of un/belongingness between the '(imagined) homelands' from a transnational, South Asian, brown woman's perspective: A case study of Taslima Nasreen's French lover. *Indialogs*, *6*, 97–113.

Hogan, S., & Pink, S. (2010). Routes to interiorities: Art therapy and knowing in anthropology. *Visual Anthropology*, *23*(2), 158–174.

Hummrich, M., & Terstegen, S. (2020). *Migration. Eine Einführung*. Springer.

Ingold, T. (2015). *The life of lines*. Routledge.

Jones, S. H., Adams, T. E., & Ellis, C. (2016). *Handbook of autoethnography*. Routledge.

Laine, A. (2020). *Practicing art and anthropology: A transdisciplinary journey*. Routledge.

Lapadat, J. C. (2017). Ethics in autoethnography and collaborative autoethnography. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *23*(8), 589–603.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1966). *The savage mind*. University of Chicago Press.

Mahler, S. J., & Pessar, P. R. (2006). Gender matters: Ethnographers bring gender from the periphery toward the core of migration studies. *International Migration Review*, *40*(1), 27–63.

Mandelbaum, J. (2012). Storytelling in conversation. In T. Stivers & J. Sidnell (Eds.), *The handbook of conversation analysis* (pp. 492–507). John Wiley & Sons.

Mariussen, Å., & Virkkala, S. (2013). Is transnational learning possible? In A. Mariussen & S. Virkkala (Eds.), *Learning transnational learning. Routledge studies in human geography No. 46* (pp. 138–154). Routledge.

Mattingly, C., Lawlor, M., & Jacobs-Huey, L. (2002). Narrating September 11: Race, gender, and the play of cultural identities. *American Anthropologist*, *104*(3), 743–753.

McHugh, K. (2000). Inside, outside, upside down, backward, forward, round and round: A case for ethnographic studies in migration. *Progress in Human Geography*, *24*(1), 71–89.

McNamara, P. (2009). Feminist ethnography: Storytelling that makes a difference. *Qualitative Social Work*, *8*(2), 161–177.
Mecheril, P. (2020). Gibt es ein transnationales Selbstbestimmungsrecht? Bewegungsethische Erkundungen. In *Bewegungen* (pp. 101–117). Barbara Budrich.
Niles, J. D. (1999). *Homo narrans: The poetics and anthropology of oral literature*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
Punch, S. (2012). Studying transnational children: A multi-sited, longitudinal, ethnographic approach. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *38*(6), 1007–1023.
Reimers, S. L. (2018). *Migration, Bildung und Familie: Ethnografische Annäherung an den Alltag dreier Generationen zwischen türkischem Dorf und Neuköllner Kiez*. transcript Verlag.
Ress, S. (2023). Mobility and education. In M. Proyer, S. Krause, & G. Kremsner (Eds.), *The making of a teacher in the age of migration—Recognition of internationally acquired teaching competences through a hegemonial lens*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
Scheunpflug, A., & Affolderbach, M. (2019). Bildung im Kontext von Migration und Diversität. In V. Klomann, N. Frieters-Reermann, M. Genenger-Stricker, & N. Sylla (Eds.), *Forschung im Kontext von Bildung und Migration* (pp. 11–2). Springer.
Silova, I., Piattoeva, N., & Millei, Z. (2018). *Childhood and schooling in (post) socialist societies. Memories of everyday life*. Palgrave Macmillan.
Stewart, K. (2007). *Ordinary affects*. Duke University Press.
Sutherland, A. (1986). *Gypsies: The hidden Americans*. Waveland Press.
van Hulst, M. (2020). Ethnography and narrative. *Policing and Society*, *30*(1), 98–115.
Weber, A., & Moritzen, K. (Eds.). (2017). *Tausend Bilder und eins: Comic als ästhetische Praxis in der postmigrantischen Gesellschaft*. transcript Verlag.

16 Children, Belonging and the New

Methodological Perspectives on the Relationship Between Construction and Reconstruction

Anja Tervooren and Nicolle Pfaff

Introduction

Whether and how children competently navigate and change various orders of difference represents a current focus of ethnographic childhood studies. Ethnographic research in primary schools seeks to establish how children (re)enact or transgress gender orders (Thorne, 1993; Tervooren, 2006; Eckermann, 2015), how they move within the social orders of societies characterised by migration, how they sometimes actively confront racism (Conolly, 1998; Spyrou, 2002; Zembylas, 2010) and how they process the differences within social milieus (Kustatcher, 2017). Children are always reacting to institutional orders and the way they are enacted in pedagogical institutions. In their processing of peer-cultural, socio-structural and institutional orders, they operate in relation to people, things and spaces, thereby creating new belongings (Iqbal et al., 2017).

In this chapter, we observe the practices among children in a second-grade elementary school class so as to examine how belonging among children is invoked and changed, and how peer-cultural, socio-structural and institutional orders are related to it. We analyse these practices of negotiating belonging using data from an ethnographic research project comprising both classroom-based participant observations and group discussions with the (school) children. In the final methodologically oriented part that follows this, we reflect upon the relationship between ethnography and the documentary method (Bohnsack et al., 2010; Weller, 2019) and discuss the contributions these methodological approaches offer, as well as the perspectives on new belongings among children that they enable.

Invoking Belonging and Negotiating Orders

On the first day of the field research in a second-grade class at an urban elementary school in the Ruhr region of Germany, the researcher introduced herself and the research project to the children in the class whom she planned to research. The school is located in an inner-city borough deeply characterised by the regionally strong cultural shift from an industrial society to a

DOI: 10.4324/9781032629384-20

This chapter has been made available under a (CC-BY-NC-ND) 4.0 license.

service-based society. The densely built-up residential area was destroyed in World War II and rebuilt afterwards. Families from working-class backgrounds have traditionally lived here, including many families who migrated to the city for different reasons, beginning in the 1950s. Over the last 10 years, the borough has been showing signs of gentrification, attracting students from the nearby university, and families with cultural, social and economic capital. The research was conducted in a second-grade class over a period of six months by means of participant observation, group discussions with children and expert interviews. The children immediately followed up with questions for the researcher:

> *One child calls out, 'Are you the one who's going to observe us?' and I say, 'Yes. Do you have any questions for me?' Many children raise their hands and I call one. 'Do you have kids?' I say, 'Yes, a daughter, but she's already grownup.' A boy asks, 'Did your daughter play tennis last weekend?' I answer in the negative. Then a child asks, 'How old are you?'*
> *(28.09.2017)*

In the string of questions from various children, several orders of difference are immediately invoked: the generational order, the gender order in connection with the question of generativity and the subject of social origins, whereby an intergenerational transmission within families is intimated. Thus, the introduction of the research project in the first (observed) minutes of the ethnographer's presence in the field turns into a processing of belongings in an intergenerational context, in which the ethnographer is measured by their willingness to share information about their own belonging. Just like the parents who had previously been informed about the project in writing, the children were told that the research would look at 'whom the children play with during recess, whom they are friends with and whom they like to work with or sit next to in class'.[1]

The school day came to an end with the collective singing of a children's song intended to kindle a pedagogical programme for the appreciation of difference:

> *To conclude they sing a song that all of the children shout at the top of their voices: 'I am different from you are different from he is different from she. She is different from he is different from you are different from me. We, we, we are different from you, you, you are different from us. So what? That's what makes life colourful! Brown is different from red is different from yellow is different from white is different from yellow is different from red is different from brown. We, we, we are different from you, you, you are different from us. So what? That's what makes life colourful!' Melek raises her hand and says with enthusiasm that she and Rabia had been in kindergarten together and learned that song there. She says she knows it by heart.*
> *(28.09.2017)*

The German-language song translated into English here enacts the appreciation of difference both programmatically and musically, yet rather than irritating any differences, it reproduces them. Its stated goal, as repeated in the refrain, is to present otherness as a fact without consequences, while the song names differences in a specific way, rhythmically enumerated and presented as being enriching in their interplay. However, quite the opposite actually happens: Gender is embraced in binary form and the colours mentioned (white, brown, black and yellow) allude to essentialist biologistic racial concepts from the 19th century and their reception in the popular cultural traditions of colonial states—for example, in a German Karneval context—even today. Moreover, the song's form and its enumeration of clearly separated units strongly contradict the appreciation of diversity proclaimed in the refrain, but none of this disturbs the children's passion for it. The fact that Melek even comes forward to report that she already knows the song from kindergarten shows that this choice of song is cultivated in various successive institutions of childhood and that different pedagogical institutions refer affirmatively to the complexity of relations of difference.

The song's lyrics thus proclaim that belonging to the school 'us' is not bound to homogeneity and equality but that it instead depends on diversity,[2] which in fact must be constantly produced anew and which is supported by the strong desire to belong. In Anglo-American scholarship, the concept of 'belonging' was used in the context of queer and postcolonial theory in the 1990s. Elsbeth Probyn (1996), for example, was an early proponent of shifting the static notion of identity in the direction of a dynamic agency that is borne primarily by a desire to belong:

> Because I think that the latter term ["belonging"] captures more accurately the desire for some sort of attachment, be it to other people, places or modes of being, and the ways in which individuals and groups are caught within wanting to belong, wanting to become, a process that is fuelled by yearning rather than the position of identity as a stable state.
>
> (Probyn, 1996, p. 19)

Vikki Bell follows this understanding and asserts that belonging should not be understood as an ontological fact, but rather as a consistent performance, an achievement, 'produced, embodied and performed, effectively, passionately and with social and political consequence' (Bell, 1999, p. 2). She emphasises the importance of the group or community in this process, in which the 'performativity of belonging "cites" the norms that constitute or make present the "community" or group as such' (Bell, 1999).

In the children's interaction with the ethnographer after her introduction, as well as in the children's song that ends the school day, belongings that structure society in an orderly way are invoked and summoned by name. In both cases, reference is made to socio-structural and social orders, especially those based on gender, generationally and natio-racially-culturally coded

belonging (Mecheril, 2003), and individual positions in these orders are explored in the interactions. For the children, conversations with the ethnographer are also a way of invoking their own belongings based on practices, objects or locations and their own relationships to them, as became apparent a few weeks later.

The ethnographer was in the schoolyard 25 minutes before the school day began, sitting on a round wooden bar that is part of a climbing frame opposite the entrance.

> *I see Imre on the step at the entrance area and nod to him. Then he comes to me. I sit on the right side of the bar, and he begins to balance on the empty part. 'I'm the only boy from 2c who's already here,' he says. I look around and say that I don't see anyone else. Imre balances his way up and down the bar and I move a little bit to the side to give him more space. 'My mother always says I should move a lot. I should do field [sports],' he says. I laugh and say, yes, that she must mean track and field [sports]. 'Do you know that we have a school break soon?' he asks and adds, 'this week.' I respond affirmingly and he says that they are going on something like a cruise. I ask who is going and he counts off, 'Mama, Papa, Milan.'*
>
> *I ask, 'Is that your brother?' and he says yes. I ask what they are going to do and he explains that they will be leaving from Barcelona and will be away a whole week even. 'Did you know that I don't come from here?' he asks. I nod and he continues, 'I was born in another country.' I respond by asking him when he came to Germany. And he replies that he was about four. 'That was 2013, no, 2014. Wait—I think it was 2013 and I was born in 2009. I didn't really want to come here but then I realised that I would find friends here too.'*
>
> *(17.10.2017)*

In this short sequence, Imre negotiates several aspects of belonging with the ethnographer, beginning with the question of belonging to the school as demonstrated by the causal use of the playground equipment in the schoolyard. Imre then prefaces the conversation by saying that he is the only boy present from his class. In this way, he offers an explanation for his entering into a conversation with the ethnographer, who is positioned differently from him in terms of both gender and generational order. In the context of this temporal and spatial transition shortly before the school day begins, the rules of the game that apply during actual school hours are apparently suspended.

Imre then immediately processes the generational order connected with the order of social milieus when he invokes his mother's normative statement that he should do 'field'. In so doing, he refers to his mother who cares about his education—his physical education in this case—and who explicitly encourages him, as a member of the next generation, to pursue it as

well. In venturing a linguistic correction, the ethnographer positions herself as strongly oriented toward education and on the side of the mother and simultaneously positions the child as the one to be educated. Imre than asks the teacher whether she actually has access to relevant knowledge about the school and whether she is aware of the school break. When she responds in the affirmative and indicates her awareness of the upcoming autumn break, he mentions a planned family holiday. In so doing, he indicates his belonging to a social milieu in which long-distance travel is a special yet familiar practice. The ethnographer uses this description to ask about the constitution of the vacationing family and learns that the one-week trip will be taken in the context of a classic nuclear family. However, another aspect becomes relevant when Imre is asked about his family, one that educationalist Paul Mecheril (2003) in his work on critical migration pedagogy describes as natio-racial-cultural belonging.

Mecheril describes orders of natio-racial-cultural belonging as the productive and powerful context of the production of difference. Reference is made to nationality, race and cultural practices, such as language or religion, in order to differentiate between a social 'us' and 'them'. According to Mecheril, the natio-cultural order of belonging as a practice of differentiation is closely tied with societal discourses, such as those about migration or integration (Mecheril, 2020. Imre actively addresses this order in the naming of his birthplace. There, once again he speaks with the ethnographer in connection with the pedagogical generational relationship, identifying her as a person who ought to know about the children's life circumstances. This is also the context of the researcher's subsequent query, in which belonging can be determined by the length of a stay. Here, Imre again addresses the familial generational relationship by explaining that he was not involved in the decision to migrate, even though he identifies himself as someone who is able to cope with the migration that took place not long ago.

During the first recess on this day, artefacts brought to school provide a reason for another child to negotiate religious belonging and milieu-specific belonging with the researcher:

> *Then I stand up and get out a paper bag from the bakery with a sandwich in it. Sayar asks what it is. I say it's just a sandwich from the bakery. I didn't have time to make one myself. Sayar responds, 'I once had a sandwich from the bakery. But without salami. I don't eat pork. You?' I shook my head, imagining myself as the vegetarian I no longer am.*
>
> *(17.10.2017)*

While all of the children take the food out of their lunch boxes and the researcher pulls her sandwich out of the paper bag, Sayar uses the opportunity to ask what she has there. The researcher is almost apologetic about having taken advantage of the services of a bakery, instead of bringing

something from home. The boy tells her that he has had such a sandwich only once and without salami. In the realm of his experience, this food is a rarity and he asks whether the researcher's sandwich has salami on it. When this is answered in the negative, Sayar adds that he does not eat pork, thereby invoking the dietary laws of two of the biggest monotheistic religions and asks about the dietary habits of his counterpart. The researcher answers from a perspective that does not draw upon different types of meat and religious requirements but is presented in terms of meat and nonmeat instead. In this way, she shows that her actions are not guided by traditional religious dietary rules, but rather by lifestyles that are common or a policy choice in the present and typical of her milieu. Her answer also leaves open the possibility that there could be an intersection between the child's belonging and her own.

In this research, in the children's interaction with the ethnographer, belonging is invoked through knowledge, practices, spaces and artefacts. It becomes clear that this is an act that must be constantly undertaken anew and which proceeds differently in each case. Nira Yuval-Davis (2006) also uses the concept of belonging to describe an activity that takes place in a continuous contestation with others:

> [B]elonging can be an act of self-identification or identification by others in a stable, contested or transient way. Even in its most stable "primordial" forms, however, belonging is always a dynamic process, not a reified fixity, which is only a naturalised construction of a particular hegemonic form of power relations.
>
> (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 119)

Yural-Davis situates belonging on three levels and describes the first level as social locations, that is, belonging to social categories through external ascription or self-identification. At this level, it is clear from the material that generativity and generationality, gender, social class and ethnicity are addressed by children in overlapping and intertwined ways in this research. Children thus emerge as 'cognisant players within the political field of identity, difference and belonging' (Taylor, 2007, p. 143). The second level of individual or collective narratives of belonging that Yural-Davis addresses is also relevant in this analysis. The position of the ethnographer in the context of the school and the conversation between Imre and the ethnographer show that belonging is generated through the desire to belong,

> [T]hrough the combined processes of being and becoming, belonging and longing to belong . . . As a rule, the emotional components of people's constructions of themselves and their identities become more central the more threatened and less secure they feel.
>
> (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 202).

Moreover, Yural-Davis sees a third, political level: 'Closely related to this are specific attitudes and ideologies concerning where and how identity and categorical boundaries are being/should be drawn, in more or less exclusionary ways, in more or less permeable ways' (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 203). In the context under consideration, this level is performed in the enthusiastic collective singing of the song 'Different from You' at the end of the school day. This pedagogical practice is an expression of the programmatic appreciation of difference in this elementary school class and aims not to problematise the different belongings and their interplay in the classroom but to deproblematise them.

The participant observations are capable of revealing this, as well as how various orders of difference—social origin and gender as well as generation and ethnicity—are performed in school as practices in different combinations and relations to each other. These performances are part of a continuous social practice negotiated in a peer group, and in which peer-cultural orders of difference overlap with institutional and socio-structural ones.

Performing Belonging and Levelling Differences

What do these practices mean for the actors involved and how do they relate to their lifeworld contexts in the peer group? To answer these questions, we draw on material from a group discussion with children from this school class and analyse it reconstructively using the documentary method of interpretation. In doing so, we avail of a form of triangulation that was frequently used in the early days of German-language youth research and later also in childhood research (e.g., Projektgruppe Jugendbüro, 1977; Bohnsack et al., 1995) but which has had only minimal methodological elaboration to date. While participant observation, as the core of an ethnographic research strategy, aims to analyse everyday cultural and situational productions of meaning by those being researched, documentary analyses in the praxeological sociology of knowledge aim to reconstruct the experiential knowledge of actors and the orientations guiding their actions (Bohnsack, 2007). Hereunder, we draw upon the documentary reconstruction of an excerpt from a group discussion to ask which lifeworld experiences and habitual orientations underlie the negotiation of belonging among the children involved.

The group discussion with four girls from the class was conducted approximately five months into the field research and occurred in the school library.[3] After a brief introductory phase, the children themselves take over the direction of the conversation. They insist on a round of introductions which they enact in a specific pop-cultural aesthetic with which the majority of the children present can immediately connect. As in the previously analysed observation sequences, the interest in self-presentation is initiated by the children

and taken up by the researcher. The first step is to negotiate what should be mentioned in the introductions and who should start:

Luana: ⌊Should we for our⌋ should we for our names do one of those rounds?

I: Um if, if you want . . .

Luana: ⌊Okay . . .

Olivia: ⌊Okay . . .⌋

Luana: Livia start . . .

Olivia: No . . .

I: @(.)⌊@

Olivia: ⌊You⌋ start,

Luana: Ok my name is Luana,

Siena: With last name.

Olivia: And with age,

Luana: Yes (.) no . . .

Siena: Yes everything, everything, everything.

I: Yes, saying age is good.

Siena: ⌊Age.

Luana: ⌊Okay⌋ (. . .) age what?

(Everyone laughs)

I: How old ⌊you are?

Olivia: ⌊How old⌋ you are?

Siena: How old you are?

Lisa-Marie: Old you ⌊are your last name.

The initial negotiation with the researcher turns into a routine debate among the girls. In a very dense interaction involving all the participants, the first and last names and ages are agreed upon as relevant characteristics. The fact that evermore characteristics become relevant to their imagination generates an emotional heightening of the children's discourse, marked by shared laughter and repetitive validations ('yes, everything, everything . . .'). Luana, who suggested the collective round of introductions, is thereby designated as the one to begin. In doing so, she emphasises twice.

Luana: ⌊My name is Luana⌋ Danielle dos Santos, am seven years old, and I come from Ang- Angola . . .

I: Oh uh huh . . .

Siena: Am- ⌊Ang- Ang- Ang-.

Lisa-Marie: We ⌊aren't saying a thi . . . ing.⌋

Siena: ⌊Go- ogo- ogula.

I: ⌊Not a thing? I don't belie-. . .⌋

Luana: ⌊(please learn)

Luana presents herself with her full name, including her first and middle names, and her age. She adds her country of origin too, even though it was

not part of the preceding negotiations. Her reference to Angola draws upon a self-description, as well as upon an external attribution that is part of public discourses and scientific practices (Machold & Mecheril, 2019) and a component of everyday praxis in pedagogical institutions (see Machold, 2015, on childcare centres and Bozay, 2012, on schools). Luana's self-presentation documents a specific experience of negotiating natio-racial-cultural belonging that is tied here to the construct of the 'country of origin', just as it is in the playground situation with Imre. The progress in the round of introductions shows that this can be connected to the other participants in the discussion:

Olivia: ⌊I am⌋ Livia, Olivia⌊Afrani.

Siena: ⌊Afrani.⌋

Olivia: Ivier um Unoma, @(.)@ and, and I am eight years old, and come from Nigeria.

Siena: Yes.

Luana: (laughs) And now you Siena . . .

Siena: Um uh (coughs).

Siena: Okay (. . .) okay, one two three so I am Siena.

Luana: (laughs)

Siena: So I am Siena, I am seven years old, come from Ghana, my father comes from Ghana and my mother comes . . .

Luana: Last name.

Siena: My, my mother comes from Ghana, my name is (. . .) Abena Kun- Pa-⌊Abena, Basigi.

??: ⌊Apio Basigi.⌋

Siena: Uh Komla,

Luana: Huh?

Siena: Yeah, Komla is my father's name and um⌊. . .

Olivia: ⌊Mother?⌋

Siena: Um⌊um . . .

Luana: ⌊Okay.⌋

Siena: I um I come from the capital of . . .

Luana: Wha . . . ?

Siena: Nigeria, @(.)@

Olivia: Capital of Nigeria,

Siena: It's called Ghana . . .

Luana: @(.)@⌊Oh like the (bros) . . .

Olivia and Siena take up both the content and the form of Luana's self-presentation. They too present themselves with their full names, their ages and their countries of origin. The performative aestheticised practice of self-presentation intensifies when it is Siena's turn. She is first asked by a laughing Luana to present herself and then she stages it as an artistic act: As in a musical performance, she starts by giving the beat, then her first name and then, after being interrupted by Luana's laughter, she starts again by naming her age and then her country of origin and that of her father. She does not

get around to mentioning her mother's country of origin, but Luana asks for her last name in accordance with the agreed-upon order. Before Siena shares her last name—which is to say, the several surnames that belong to her—she reports her mother's nation of origin. Luana and Olivia are locating themselves with the naming of their countries of origin. Siena, by contrast, limits herself to her father and mother's origins and does not elaborate on her own until later.[4]

This indicates differences in the group's positioning in the context of migration and in the constructions of national belonging. At the same time, the three girls have in common their familiarity with the performance of changing and the reference to different African nations in the descriptions of origins. The fact that this constitutes a realm of common experience is revealed in the discussion by the fourth participant, who does not continue this specific performance in the form so developed, even though the other girls strongly urge her to do so and offer her assistance.

I: ⌊Lisa-Marie?⌋
Lisa-Marie: No,
I: Uh, don't you want to say something?
Lisa-Marie: ⌊Nah . . .
Luana: ⌊Please . . . ⌋⌊()
I: ⌊Okay then tell how old you are.
??: ⌊()
Luana: ⌊Oh yeah that is . . . ⌋ Lisa-Marie Stratmann⌋
Lisa-Marie: ⌊I am eight.⌋
I: You are eight . . .
Luana: That is Lisa-Marie Stratmann, she is eight and comes from Germany.
I: @(.)@
Siena: Yeah, Stratmann.

At the end of the opening sequence in the group discussion, the researcher explicitly creates a space for Lisa-Marie to speak by giving her the opportunity to speak. Also because the other girls asks Lisa-Marie to introduce herself several times, and the researcher breaks with the methodological premise of the self-progression of the group discussion at this point. Luana assumes the request for Lisa-Marie to participate in the introduction and at first even vicariously assumes the introduction: Luana introduces Lisa-Marie by naming in chant form all the—by now—routinised characteristics. Lisa-Marie is thus identified by her last name and in relation to her origins as being from Germany. The routine that exists in the majority society of asking only people with a presumed history of migration about their origins is thus turned on its head. Because the girls have identified one's origins as an identity-forming characteristic, they require it as a part of the self-presentation. This, in turn, makes a usually invisible and unquestioned belonging explicit for Lisa-Marie, who was born in Germany. Lisa-Marie experiences this in the context of the introductions as an external ascription

since she only hesitantly enters the round and Luana takes over the naming of her country of origin.

Although belonging is expressed through the *content* of the chant, that is, in the naming of names and origins, it is articulated even more clearly in the *form* of the chant as a performative practice of self-presentation. While Luana, Olivia and Siena demonstrate a shared interest in popular culture and the associated aesthetic practices, Lisa-Marie does not. In this pop-cultural enactment of belonging made popular in the context of rap music, the three girls do not work on an aesthetic level with direct reference to social categories but choose a style with which to express it.[5] Since the 1990s, German-language youth culture research (Hitzler et al., 2001, 2008) has considered belonging to be an expression of youth scenes in posttraditional communities that is self-selected and articulated through style. Detached from socio-structural conditions, belonging is thus negotiated as an identification and a dimension of relationships to be elaborated interactively.

At the same time, there are numerous indications, especially from research on youth, that young people process experiences of social exclusion through identification with youth scenes (Weller, 2003; Pfaff, 2006; Kaya, 2015). It has also been shown that social orders can be reproduced, handed down or even changed (see, however, Riegel & Geisen, 2009; Amling, 2015; Hoffmann, 2015). The group discussion with Luana, Siena, Olivia and Lisa-Marie shows that it would be useful to apply similar theoretical perspective to children's pop-cultural practices as well.

In the reconstructed discussion sequence, commonalities and differences in realms of experience are rendered explicit. In the sociology of knowledge, the concept of the conjunctive realm of experience (Mannheim, 1964) refers to lifeworld contexts in which actors form similar orientations against the background of similar experiences and similar practices. On the one hand, belonging becomes relevant in the question of the shaping of the interactional situation and the participants' roles. On the other hand, the opening discussion sequence becomes a space for negotiating ethno-racial-cultural and youth-cultural belonging. Difference is constructed here less in terms of change and exclusion from a nation-racial-cultural 'us' and more in terms of the presentation of a multiple belonging. In the discourses that revolve around generativity and ethnicity, as well as in the children's cultural aesthetics presented, peer-cultural differences are intimated, opening up spaces for self-positioning. Thus, the children can relate positively to both belonging and hybridity. Societal conditions in which migration is negatively ascribed are thereby transformed and new things developed.

Belongings in Children's Peer Cultures: Methodological Perspectives on the Emergence of the New

Both the foregoing analyses of the participant observations, presented as a core method of ethnography, as well as the reconstructive research on group discussions reveal diverse practices of calling, pointing out and negotiating

belonging. The children refer above all to the lines of difference that appear with respect to generation, milieu, nationality, race or culture and, thus, to social categories and relations of inequality. In this context, it is initially apparent in both analytical perspectives that the generational order takes precedence over the pedagogical order, which becomes centrally relevant in the context of the school. Thus, in various contexts, the researcher is addressed as a mother, rather than as an educator. In the participant observation, it becomes clear that these negotiations constitute a continuous social practice. Other lines of difference, such as gender or roles as members in the school as an organisation, become the subject of negotiation. In the documentary reconstruction of the discussion sequence, belonging becomes observable as a negotiation of milieu-specific realms of experience that develop here primarily along the lines of generation, nationality, ethnicity and youth-cultural styles. At the same time, the positioning of the actors can be found in these differences, which negotiate belonging not only in relation to the researcher but also among the children, thereby creating order. The observed and reconstructed practices of pointing out, calling out, negotiating and levelling differences are highly compatible with the pedagogical programme of appreciating diversity.

At the same time, however, the calling out of differences always harbours tensions of particularity. The findings presented here thus support the results of recent studies which indicate that children balance tensions between self-enacted newer identities and the forms handed down in pedagogical practices and institutional settings. Using children's interviews for the friendships of 8- and 9-year-olds in an inner-city London neighbourhood, for example, Iqbal, Neal and Vincent (2017) show that 'super-diversity' is something they take for granted. However, the children must balance that with the tension of diversity being portrayed in their elementary school as something special and worthy of celebration. Similarly, based on participant observations of 5- to 7-year-olds in a Scottish school, Kustatcher (2017) points out that children work through class-related identities by engaging with highly ambivalent institutional discourses on the subject.

Here, the combination of ethnography and reconstructive research components proves fruitful. Older studies on difference in childhood research in German-speaking countries often applied participant observation and group discussion methods in combination (Tervooren, 2006; Krüger et al., 2012). However, there are few reflections to date on interfaces, methodological bridges or bridges between ethnography and reconstructive analysis (Neumann, 2019; Fritzsche & Wagner-Willi, 2013. Instead, reconstructive methods have gained importance in childhood and youth research in German-speaking countries. Transcripts, such as those of group discussions, are increasingly understood within reconstructive text analyses as real representations of social interaction practices. In German-speaking ethnography too, a stronger reconstructive analytical practice has come to predominate that understands participant observations primarily as data (Breidenstein, 2017).

The analysis of observation protocols has thus moved closer to a reconstructive approach (Breidenstein et al., 2013). Fieldwork and analysis have become decoupled in the research process, and the analytical process in ethnography has become methodologised and narrowed (Breidenstein, 2017). By contrast, the preceding analysis emphasises the clearly identified constructive capacity of participant observation, which originally characterised ethnography just as much as the compilation of data did that reveals mutual contexts. Ethnography thus resists having a reconstructive approach and, within a methodologically plural setting, 'the status of participant observation is initially blurred' (Budde, 2015, p. 9).

In the documentary reconstruction of the group discussion, it becomes apparent in the treatment of generationality and nationality and/or ethnicity that social hierarchies are invoked and remain effective in communicative terms, even though they are suspended or transgressed in practice. The negotiation of belonging in the interaction with the researcher allows the children to reorder themselves in relation to the lines of difference. The spatial, social and aesthetic arenas of these negotiation processes become accessible in ethnography, which reveals that an additional spectrum of belongings is exhorted in this field of study. Institutional contexts also become revealed when, for example, equity programmes are invoked by pedagogical institutions.

The integration of the research results is achieved via common methodological references and research methodological principles. Thus, ethnomethodology forms a common line of development in both approaches (Bohnsack, 2003). Against the backdrop of the interest in people's everyday practices, considerations of practice theory also represent a common point of reference for ethnography and the documentary method (Neumann, 2019).[6] Accordingly, both approaches share a foundation in social theory (Schatzki, 1996; Bourdieu, 1997). Pursuant to practice theories, they agree upon the 'basic assumption of an "informal", "implicit" logic of the social and of action' (Reckwitz, 2003, p. 291) and a routinisation of practice. Action is understood as a 'knowledge-based activity' (Reckwitz, 2003, p. 292) and, as such, becomes the object of both approaches in the research process.

However, there are differences in the analytical focus of the two approaches. While the interest of participant observation in ethnography is directed towards the reconstruction of the production of meaning in concrete situations of action and the understanding of the everyday culture of the people being researched (Kelle, 2004), documentary analyses in the sociology of praxeological knowledge aim at the reconstruction of the experiential knowledge of actors and the orientations guiding their actions (Bohnsack, 2007). The combination of both approaches thus holds the promise of being particularly productive when the relationship between knowledge and practice in the production of social and cultural phenomena becomes the focus of the research.

In practice, the sociology of knowledge understands the negotiations of belonging analysed here as being social practices in which the communicative

and milieu-specific stocks of knowledge are documented. Transgressions of pedagogical generational relations and an active, positive connection to multiple belonging and hybridity indicate negotiations of belonging that question existing social orders and unfurl transformational potentials. On the level of the relationship between knowledge about social norms and field or milieu-specific conjunctive knowledge, productive tensions between social structures and the children's own blueprints for their identity become apparent in the reconstructions presented, as do opportunities for emancipation. Participant observation, on the other hand, emphasises the situational contexts of the thematisation and production of difference. It becomes clear, for example, that gender becomes relevant for the children in the social field of the school under study, primarily in the schoolyard and in the constitution of informal groups, for example, for group discussions. It thus signifies the opportunity structures, as well as the social, interactive, material and institutional contexts in which children invoke and negotiate issues of belonging. Thus, 'in particular, aspects of the performative, linguistically unrepresented (not explicated) or unrepresentable (inexplicable) elements and processes of action in practice on the part of those being researched, such as stylistic means of expression' and 'the bodily-spatial organisation of everyday action or bodily actionisms '(Bohnsack, 2003 p. 146) are investigated instead by means of observation (Göhlich & Wagner-Willi, 2001, p. 138).

Conclusion

With this contribution, our intention was to show that the potential of the inherently logical combination of ethnography and the documentary method lies in the combination of construction and reconstruction. We also aimed to explicate potential limitations in this triangulation of methods. In participant observation as the core method of ethnography, interpretative approaches produced in the situation always flow into the writing. The observations are thus resistant to the documentary reconstruction approach. Due to its origins in ethnology, ethnography is also linked to a tradition of writing, the precise reflection of representational relationships and the combination of a wide variety of data. Ethnographers who are part of a tradition of anthropology consciously work with the constructive character of ethnography. This is most evident in participant observation and its interpretations.

The documentary method follows its own logic, while a reconstruction of observation reports would be dedicated to the documentary character of these same texts. Thus, the constructions of difference by the writers would be highlighted. This would certainly be an important concern in the context of the question of the complexity of affiliations, which is the focus of this chapter. But against the background of the question of how affiliations are invoked and changed among children and how peer-cultural, socio-structural and institutional orders are set in relation to one another, it cannot be what researchers understand themselves to be, but rather what they do not (experience) live.

Notes

1 The quotation comes from a letter to the parents in which they were informed about the research project and asked to give permission for their children to participate.
2 At the same time, the song can be read as a cultural positioning of the school class in the societal tension between the discursive problematisation of heterogeneity in educational institutions on the one hand and the specialist cultural demand for the appreciation of that same heterogeneity on the other (Budde, 2012; Gabaldón-Estevan, 2020).
3 The children chose the group constellation themselves. In this discussion, Siena is the one who literally puts the group together; the group table at which the girls and some boys are sitting becomes the spatial context in which the split-second composition occurs.
4 Luana ends with a hint about 'bros'. In Ghanaian diasporic popular culture one can find the figures of the 'brothers', two grownups who represent a certain life and fashion style, like the Mitch Brothers. But we have no more hints regarding this shared knowledge of the children.
5 Of course, music styles also have specific references, while social orders and rap in particular includes intensive negotiation of gender orders and of natio-racial-cultural orders of belonging (Dietrich, 2016).
6 Neumann (2019) identifies ethnography and the documentary method as approaches to social reality that, as research theories, closely link theoretical assumptions about the sociality of knowledge and practice with the research practice itself. As 'theoretical empiricism' (Kalthoff et al., 2008), these are productive terms of theoretical foundations and *Gegenstandstheorie*. As 'theories of empiricism' (Nassehi, 2006, p. 256), they reflexively question themselves.

References

Amling, S. (2015). *Peergroups und Zugehörigkeit. Empirische Rekonstruktionen und ungleichheitstheoretische Reflexionen*. Springer VS. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-09013-5

Bell, V. (1999). Performativity and belonging. *Theory, Culture and Society*, *16*(2), 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1177/02632769922050511

Bohnsack, R. (2003). *Rekonstruktive Sozialforschung. Einführung in qualitative Methoden* (5th ed.). Leske & Budrich. https://doi.org/10.36198/9783838585543

Bohnsack, R. (2007). *Rekonstruktive Sozialforschung. Einführung in qualitative Methoden* (6th ed.). UTB. https://doi.org/10.36198/9783838585543

Bohnsack, R., Loos, P., Schäffer, B., Städtler, K., & Wild, B. (1995). *Die Suche nach Gemeinsamkeit und die Gewalt in der Gruppe. Hooligans, Musikgruppen und andere Jugendliche*. Leske & Budrich. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-663-09767-9

Bohnsack, R., Pfaff, N., & Weller, W. (Eds.). (2010). *Qualitative analysis and documentary method in international educational research*. B. Budrich. https://doi.org/10.3224/86649236

Bourdieu, P. (1997). *Sozialer Sinn. Kritik der theoretischen Vernunft*. Suhrkamp.

Bozay, K. (2012). Probleme und Ursachen der Re-Ethnisierung und Selbstethnisierung im Klassenzimmer. In K. Fereidooni (Ed.), *Das interkulturelle Lehrerzimmer: Perspektiven neuer deutscher Lehrkräfte auf den Bildungs-und Integrationsdiskurs* (pp. 117–124). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-94344-2_10

Breidenstein, G. (2017). Interdisziplinäre tradition und disziplinäre Konvention in der erziehungswissenschaftlichen Ethnographie. *ZQF*, *18*(1), 9–20. https://doi.org/10.3224/zqf.v18i1.02

Breidenstein, G., Hirschauer, S., Kalthoff, H., & Nieswand, B. (2013). *Ethnografie. Die Praxis der Feldforschung*. UTB. https://doi.org/10.36198/9783838552873
Budde, J. (2012). Die Rede von der Heterogenität in der Schulpädagogik. Diskursanalytische Perspektiven. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, *13*(2). https://doi.org/10.17169/fqs-13.2.1761
Budde, J. (2015). Reflexionen zur Bedeutung von Handlung und Praktik in der Ethnographie. *ZQF*, *16*(1), 7–24. https://doi.org/10.3224/zqf.v16i1.22851
Connolly, P. (1998). *Racism, gender identities and young children. Social relations in a multi-ethnic, inner city primary school*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203026878
Dietrich, M. (Ed.). (2016). *Rap im 21. Jahrhundert. Eine (Sub-)Kultur im Wandel*. transcript Verlag. https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839432273
Eckermann, T. (2015). Das Spiel mit der Geschlechterdifferenz—aufs Spiel gesetzte Grenzen? *GENDER*, *7*(1), 49–63. https://doi.org/10.3224/gender.v7i1.18156
Fritzsche, B., & Wagner-Willi, M. (2013). Ethnografie und Videografie in praxeologischer Perspektive. In P. Loos, A.-M. Nohl, B. Schäffer, & A. Pzyborski (Eds.), *Dokumentarische Methode* (pp. 268–283). Verlag Barbara Budrich. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvddzq3c
Gabaldón-Estevan, D. (2020). Heterogeneity versus homogeneity in schools: A study of the educational value of classroom interaction. *Education Sciences*, *10*(11), 335. https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci10110335
Geisen, T., & Riegel, C. (2009). *Jugend, Partizipation und Migration. Orientierungen im Kontext von Integration und Ausgrenzung*. VS Verlag. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-91663-7
Hitzler, R., Bucher, T., & Niederbacher, A. (2001). *Leben in Szenen. Formen jugendlicher Vergemeinschaftung heute*. Leske & Budrich. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-92532-5
Hitzler, R., Honer, A., & Pfadenhauer, M. (Eds.). (2008). *Posttraditionale Gemeinschaften. Theoretische und ethnografische Erkundungen*. VS Verlag. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-91780-1
Hoffmann, N. F. (2015). *Szene und soziale Ungleichheit: Habituelle Stile in der Techno/Elektro-Szene*. Springer VS. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-11518-0
Iqbal, H., Neal, S., & Vincent, C. (2017). Children's friendships in super-diverse localities: Encounters with social and ethnic difference. *Childhood*, *24*(1), 128–142. https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568216633741
Kalthoff, H., Hirschauer, S., & Lindemann, G. (2008). *Theoretische empirie*. Suhrkamp.
Kaya, V. (2015). *HipHop zwischen Istanbul und Berlin. Eine (deutsch-)türkische Jugendkultur im lokalen und transnationalen Beziehungsgeflecht*. transcript Verlag. https://doi.org/10.14361/transcript.9783839429105
Kelle, H. (2004). Ethnographische Ansätze. In E. Glaser, D. Klika, & A. Prengel (Eds.), *Handbuch gender und Erziehungswissenschaften* (pp. 636–650). Klinkhardt. https://doi.org/10.25595/1001
Krüger, H.-H., Deinert, A., & Zschach, M. (2012). *Jugendliche und ihre Peers*. Barbara Budrich. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvddzt3q
Kustatscher, M. (2017). Young children's social class identities in everyday life at primary school: The importance of naming and challenging complex inequalities. *Childhood*, *24*(3), 381–395. https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568216684540
Machold, C. (2015). Wie Individuen zu 'ethnisch anderen' Kindern werden. Ethnizitätsrelevante Unterscheidungspraktiken in Kindertagesstätten und ihr Beitrag zur (Re-)Produktion von Ungleichheit. *Soziale Passagen*, *7*(1), 35–50. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12592-015-0185-y
Machold, C., & Mecheril, P. (2019). Kindheiten in der Migrationsgesellschaft. In J. Drerup & G. Schweiger (Eds.), *Handbuch Philosophie der Kindheit* (pp. 362–370). J.B. Metzler. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-476-04745-8_46
Mannheim, K. (1964). *Wissenssoziologie*. Luchterhand.

Mecheril, P. (2003). *Prekäre Verhältnisse. Über natio-ethno-kulturelle (Mehrfach-)Zugehörigkeit*. Waxmann.
Mecheril, P. (2020). Soziale Zugehörigkeit. Begrifflicher Umriss eines Phänomens. In M. Rieger-Ladich, R. Casale, & C. Thompson (Eds.), *Un/Zugehörigkeit. Bildungsphilosophische Reflexionen und machttheoretische Studien* (pp. 37–53). Beltz-Juventa.
Nassehi, A. (2006). *Der soziologische Diskurs der Moderne*. Suhrkamp.
Neumann, S. (2019). Ethnographie und Dokumentarische Methode. In O. Dörner, P. Loos, B. Schäffer, & A.-C. Schondelmayer (Eds.), *Dokumentarische Methode: Triangulation und blinde Flecken* (pp. 52–67). Barbara Budrich. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvkjb282.6
Pfaff, N. (2006). *Jugendkultur und Politisierung. Eine multimethodische Studie zur Entwicklung politischer Orientierungen im Jugendalter*. VS Verlag. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-90157-2
Probyn, E. (1996). *Outside belongings*. Routledge.
Projektgruppe Jugendbüro und Hauptschülerarbeit. (1977). *Die Lebenswelt von Hauptschülern*. Juventa.
Reckwitz, A. (2003). Grundelemente einer Theorie sozialer Praktiken. *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, *32*(4), 282–301. https://doi.org/10.1515/zfsoz-2003-0401
Schatzki, T. (1996). *Social practices. A Wittgensteinian approach to human activity and the social*. Cambridge University Press.
Spyrou, S. (2002). Images of 'the other': 'the Turk' in Greek Cypriot children's imaginations. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *5*(3), 255–272. https://doi.org/10.1080/1361332022000004850
Taylor, A. (2007). Playing with difference: The cultural politics of childhood belonging. *The International Journal of Diversity in Organizations, Communities, and Nations: Annual Review*, *7*(3), 143–150. https://doi.org/0.18848/1447-9532/CGP/v07i03/58016
Tervooren, A. (2006). *Im Spielraum von Geschlecht und Begehren*. Juventa.
Thorne, B. (1993). *Gender play: Girls and boys in school*. Rutgers University Press.
Weller, W. (2003). *Hip Hop in São Paulo und Berlin. Ästhetische Praxis und Ausgrenzungserfahrungen junger Schwarzen und Migranten*. Leske & Budrich. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-663-10306-6
Weller, W. (2019). Group discussion and documentary method in education research. In *Oxford research encyclopedias, education*. Oxford University Press.
Yuval-Davis, N. (2006). Belonging and the politics of belonging. *Patterns of Prejudice*, *40*(3), 197–214. https://doi.org/10.1080/00313220600769331
Zembylas, M. (2010). Children's construction and experience of racism and nationalism in Greek-Cypriot primary schools. *Childhood*, *17*(3), 312–328. https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568209345613

Conclusion

The 'New' in Ethnography in Times of Crises

Jürgen Budde, Michael Meier-Sternberg, Georg Rißler and Anke Wischmann

Innovation and Transformation in Educational Ethnographic Research

The 'new' appears in ethnographic educational research in at least three ways. First, existing social practices are scrutinised, with unusual and new perspectives being developed in the process. By analysing established educational practices and phenomena, new descriptions of the supposedly familiar can be introduced, from which new theories may also emerge. Second, new phenomena are capable of being analysed, for example, and in particular digital practices. In this context, the extent to which something new actually emerges or transformations of existing practices instead become evident is then explored through observation. Third, academic discourses influence educational ethnography by applying or inventing new approaches, terms or concepts. Finally, the recent special interest in (new) materialities and spaces is broadening ethnography's gaze beyond human perspectives. As the contributions in this volume show, this includes a wide range of differing currents and approaches, which together indicate a decentring of the modern subject. Poststructuralist (Foucault, 2010) and posthumanist (Barad, 2007) theories, concepts of the Anthropocene, as indeed practice–theoretical elaborations (Schatzki, 2012) inform educational ethnography. In this way, the observation perspective extends beyond the study of interactions between subjects to the analysis of human–environment connections and interrelationships.

The latter two developments in particular have implications for the further development of ethnographic methods and methodologies, for example, by observing digital worlds, tracing the perspectives of nonhuman actors, collaging pluralistic data in creative ways, visiting unusual places or making new connections. New research strategies are also being developed. At the same time, these are closely related to questions about the contextualisation of ethnographic research. Thus, in an extension of the discussion on the crisis of representation, ethical and diversity-sensitive impulses, as indeed questions of social and educational justice, are increasingly being considered that attempt to overcome established scientific dichotomies (such as between researchers and research subjects, and objective analysis and subjective understanding)

DOI: 10.4324/9781032629384-21

This chapter has been made available under a (CC-BY-NC-ND) 4.0 license.

from a power-critical perspective. Sensitivity, vulnerability and cooperativeness are thus important methodological points of reference. All these perspectives are documented in this volume in different ways and indicate a multiplying field of research.

At the same time, however, theoretical, empirical and methodological problematisations and systematisations can also be outlined within the 'slipstream', so-to-speak, of the multifaceted interest in the 'new'. On the one hand—not least against the background of socio-ecological crisis diagnoses and a critique oriented towards questions of sustainability—the idea of permanent renewal itself should be highlighted and criticised as a neoliberal project of ongoing innovation. In the sense of a dynamic stabilisation, a transformation not only contributes to the continuation of the existing, it is even a necessary condition (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2011) because the concept of permanent renewal goes hand in hand with a de-thematization of questions about the deeper meaning of the 'new'. The acceleration and expansion of the scope of (human) action are not automatically synonymous with social and societal progress (Fraser & Jaeggi, 2020) but often serve the purpose of economisation. Ethnographic research also has to consider the increasing pull of the usability, innovative application and thus economic benefit of its work, so that one of the central strengths of ethnography—namely, the analysis of that which is presented as programmatically innovative (such as digitalisation in the field of education) often implicitly follows different paths and traditions than normatively postulated—loses significance in the academic and public discourse. The constant call for something new also de-thematises the immanent power relations. Who or what has the power to declare something new? And who or what is devalued, expropriated or scorned if something does not appear to be new? Put simply, in late modern societies, novelty also implies an unsustainable pressure to innovate.

Beyond this, however, the issue of temporality as it presents itself to educational ethnography needs to be problematised in two ways. For the question of whether something can or should be considered 'new' fundamentally refers to a temporal dimension. What is 'new' is that which in a certain sense did not exist 'before': at least not in the particular form of this specific expression, not to this extent and not in this region. Regardless of what the reference to the 'new' is in terms of the content, it is inevitably based on a temporal comparison that recognises two specific points. In most cases, these are the present and the past, but it is also possible to identify changes between past points in time that can be understood as being 'new' within the framework of historical studies. New in this sense can be defined as a substantial difference between two points in time. The issue that systematically arises here is that the 'new' is measured against—or understood on the basis of—the 'old' in the present time (Zirden, 2005, p. 12ff). Frequently, however, the 'old' of the 'former' circumstance or situation cannot be identified empirically as such because there are no corresponding studies posing similar questions. This is

particularly true for ethnographic studies, as they cannot really be 'replicated' and are often highly specific. For example, the findings of ethnographic studies on the intersection of class and masculinity in the 1980s in Britain (Willis, 1978) or later in Germany (Tertilt, 1996) are hardly transferable in their concrete analyses, and instead are tied to a particular time and place, so that theory-based statements can only be made at a very high level of abstraction. This often means that assumptions about past practice are quite vague. What was common in the past cannot necessarily be observed ethnographically in practice.

A second time-related methodological argument seems equally important in this context, namely, that ethnography tends to observe a practice that is already to some extent routinised or needs to be routinised, in order to be realised at all. It is true that a practice may be fragile, unfamiliar or experimental—and the reactions to the results of the first PISA study or the social behaviour of people after disasters are examples of this, as was the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic in educational institutions. At the same time, however, these are only temporary and extraordinary intermediate states that do not emerge in a 'vacuum' but are linked to and stabilise existing practices, orientations, discourses and materialities. So if the 'new' appears as something sudden and radically different, then from an ethnographic perspective, it is the routines that should be revealed alongside the ruptures because these routines stabilise the practice so that it can occur collectively as a mostly implicit 'doing whatever' (Budde, 2011). However, routines are far more difficult to observe than ruptures because one of their core elements is their silent execution. Yet for that, over the course of the erosion of social (and also educational) orders that are considered familiar (in the Global North), it can be assumed that crisis-like upheavals will increase. However, it is often the case that the 'new' does not emerge suddenly and radically, but rather in slow processes. This can be seen, for example, in the fact that, despite developments such as globalisation, climate change and digitalisation, similar subjects and teaching methods have been taught and applied in schools for decades. Any change in school learning cultures thus occurs within routinised events. Practice needs the stability of (never identical) iteration (Butler, 1993), and an ethnographic observation of this practice is, in one sense, an academic translation of the old practice that has not yet been scientifically described.

These three problematisations (the pressure to innovate, a lack of temporal anchoring and routines) lead to the strengthening of the central ethnographic argument that any expression of practice is not new, but always already known and therefore 'old'. In our view, this constitutes the core of ethnographic work, which always operates on the boundary between the old and the new. Against this background, there are two essential contributions that educational ethnography can make to the exploration of the 'new' in times of global, human-made crises.

First, the creative and irritating perspective that ethnography is capable of considering social practices allows powerful narratives of progress—as

inscribed in the narratives of capitalist societies—to be subjected to critical analysis. The temporal linking of the past and the present, which, in the ethnographic perspective on practices, is conceived as a stable and, at the same time, flexible relation, permits an understanding of the 'new' in relational contexts. In this way, a mediating position can be adopted that implies neither an overestimation of innovation nor some fatalistic logic of simple reproduction. Second, the specific perspective on temporality refers to relations and connections, and this enables ethnography to focus on constellations and contexts in a particular way. This understanding of research is diametrically opposed to a quantifying and decontextualising notion of statistical causalities and could—as many of the contributions in this volume document—strengthen contextualisation. Local and global crisis phenomena then appear not as a series of singular events but as practical interdependencies, which could and should be observed ethnographically.

References

Barad, K. M. (2007). *Meeting the universe halfway. Quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning*. Duke University Press.

Boltanski, L., & Chiapello, È. (2011). *Le nouvel esprit du capitalisme*. Gallimard.

Budde, J. (2011). Dabei sein ist alles? Erkenntnispotential ethnographischer Beobachtungen anhand von Interaktionspraktiken zur Verteilung des Rederechts im Unterricht. *Zeitschrift für Qualitative Forschung*, *12*(1), 125–148.

Butler, J. P. (1993). *Bodies that matter. On the discursive limits of 'sex'*. Routledge.

Foucault, M. (2010). *The government of self and others*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Fraser, N., & Jaeggi, R. (2020). *Capitalism. A conversation in critical theory* (Reprinted ed. v. Brian Milstein). Polity.

Schatzki, T. R. (2012). A primer on practices. In J. Higgs (Ed.), *Practice-based education. Perspectives and strategies* (pp. 13–26). Sense Publishers.

Tertilt, H. (1996). *Turkish power boys*. Suhrkamp.

Willis, P. E. (1978). *Learning to labour. How working class kids get working class jobs*. Routledge.

Zirden, S. (2005). *Theorie des Neuen*. Königshausen & Neumann.

Index

Note: Page numbers in *italic* indicate a figure on the corresponding page.

academic setting 126–129, *126–130*
accidents 84–89, *87*
action/actions 14–15, 49–52, 62–65, 81–82, 95–96; creativity 90–95, *90–92*; the crisis of time 82–84; improvisation 84–95, *87*, *90–92*; nexuses of 107–115
actor-network theory (ANT) 48–49
analogies 93–94
animals 163–171; animal-assisted education 57–66
art 81–82, 95–96; creativity 90–95, *90–92*; the crisis of time 82–84; improvisation 84–95, *87*, *90–92*
assemblages 146–147
autoethnography 180–182, 184–186, *184*, 189–190; creating storytelling 186–189; narrating collective memories of migration 181–184
automation 22–23

Basque country 71, 73–76, 78
becoming 49
belonging: children's peer cultures 203–206; invoking belonging and negotiating orders 193–199; performing belonging and levelling differences 199–203
Berlin 184–186
Bildung 70–79
biography, collective 182
borders 140–142, 147–148, 180–181, 188–189
boundaries, shifting 163–171
boundary-making practices 166–167
bricolage 146–147
childhood memories 180–181, 184–186, *184*, 189–190; creating storytelling 186–189; narrating collective memories of migration 181–184
children: belongings in peer cultures 203–206; invoking belonging and negotiating orders 193–199; performing belonging and levelling differences 199–203; *see also* childhood memories
classroom, noise in 23–24
coding 115–116, *115*
collaborations 134–137; crossing borders in 147–148; multi-everything ethnography 137–140; production of ethnographic knowledge 144–147; transnational ethnographic collaboration 140–143
collective biography 182
collective memories 181–184
complexity 111–114, *112–113*
constellations ethnography 107–109; coding 115–116, *115*; from complexity to social order 111–114, *112–113*; mapping of the constellation 116; methodological implications 114–115; practice theoretical foundation 109–110, *110*; selection of the key categories of 116–117
construction: belongings in children's peer cultures 203–206; invoking belonging and negotiating orders 193–199; of the objective 122; performing belonging and levelling differences 199–203
creation 143

creativity 81–82, 84, 86–89, 95–96; and improvisation 90–95, *90*
crisis of time 81–84, 89

data: analysis 123; collection 123; noise in 18–24; vulnerability of 158–160
differences, levelling 199–203
discursive aspects of image symbolism 125–126

education 76–78; researching the unseen and unspoken in 120–122, *121*
education, history of 70–79
educational ethnography 16–18, 24–26; noise in data 18–24
educational research: emerging practices of visual technoculture 35–38, *35*, *37*; increasing human–technology entanglements 38–42, *40*; multispecies ethnography in 57–66; netnography for 29–34
empirical analyses 177–178
empirical explorations 126–129, *126–130*
empirical perspectives 6–7
epistemological processes 152–160
equestrianism 170–171
ethnographic collaborations 134–137; crossing borders in 147–148; multi-everything ethnography 137–140; production of ethnographic knowledge 144–147; transnational 140–143
ethnographic communities 144–145
ethnographic episodes 19–24
ethnographic knowledge 144–147
ethnographic writing 144–147
ethnography 13–15; and *Bildung* 72–73; educational 16–26; history of 70–79; of movement 167–170, *169*; multifold 170–171; the 'new' in times of crises 210–213; old and new varieties of materialism in 46–55; potential 163–171; and the vulnerability of epistemological processes 152–160; *see also* multispecies ethnography
extended agency 50

Feminist New Materialism 49, 52
fetishisation of 'the new' 16, 25
fixing 142
fragility 155–157

glitch 16–18, 19, 21, 23, 24–26; noise in data 18–24
global assemblages 146–147
grooving in 141

history of education 70–79
history of ethnography 70–79
home 184–186
humans 163–171
human–technology entanglements 32, 34, 38–42, *40*, 49
human–technology relations 49
Humboldt, Wilhelm von 70–79

image 125
image symbolism 125–126
immersive technologies 30–34
improvisation 81–82, 84–89, 96; and creativity 90–95, *90*
innovation 210–213
intellectual aristocracy 70–79
international ethnographic communities 144–147
intimate 31, 33, 38, 41
intra-actions 166–167
irreducible, noise as 18–19

jamming 141

knowledge: ethnographic 144–147; vulnerability of 153–155

local ethnographic communities 144–145

mapping, constellation 116
materialism 46–55; new 48–54, 163–171
materialities, coding of 115–116, *115*
memories 180–181, 184–186, *184*, 189–190; creating storytelling 186–189; narrating collective memories of migration 181–184
methodological approaches 5–6
methodological perspectives: belongings in children's peer cultures 203–206; invoking belonging and negotiating orders 193–199; performing belonging and levelling differences 199–203
migrating 180–181, 184–186, *184*, 189–190; creating storytelling

186–189; narrating collective memories of 181–184
movement, ethnography of 167–170, *169*
multi-everything ethnography 137–140
multifold ethnographies 170–171
multispecies ethnography 57–66

narrating collective memories 181–184
necessity 82, 88–89, 94–95
netnography 29–34; emerging practices of visual technoculture 35–38, *35*, *37*; increasing human–technology entanglements 38–42, *40*
new, the 4–5, 177–178; and children and belonging 193–206; and educational ethnography 16–26; producing something new 140–143; in times of crises 210–213; and the vulnerability of epistemological processes 152–160
new educational theory 13–15
new materialisms 46–53, 163–171
newness, perspectivation of 142–143
nexuses of action 107–109, 116–117; coding 115–116, *115*; from complexity to social order 111–114, *112–113*; mapping of the constellation 116; methodological implications 114–115; practice theoretical foundation 109–110, *110*
noise 18–26
nondualistic 50

ontologies, process 50, 163–171
orders of difference 193–199
organisational factors, coding of 115–116, *115*
outlooks 131

pedagogy, animal-assisted 59–61, 63–65
peer cultures 203–206
perception: of the new 5–6; new perspectives 122; reframing 124–125
perspectivation of newness 142–143
postphenomenology 49
(post-)socialist childhood memories 180–181, 184–186, *184*, 189–190; creating storytelling 186–189; narrating collective memories of migration 181–184
potential ethnographies 163–171
practice–theoretical conception 107–110, *110*, 116–117; coding 115–116, *115*; from complexity to social order 111–114, *112–113*; mapping of the constellation 116; methodological implications 114–115; practice theoretical foundation 109–110, *110*
prediction 20–21
presentational aspects of image symbolism 125–126
process ontologies 163–171
provisional solutions 90–93, *90–91*
publication 124

questions 131

reconstruction: belongings in children's peer cultures 203–206; invoking belonging and negotiating orders 193–199; performing belonging and levelling differences 199–203
relationality 50
representation of the new 5–6
research process, fragility of 155–157; *see also* educational research
rich reality: emerging practices of visual technoculture 35–38, *35*, *37*; increasing human–technology entanglements 38–42, *40*; netnography 29–34

settings 108–109
signposts 131
silhouettes analysis 53, 167–170, *169*
similarity relationships 93–94
situational analysis 114–115
socialist childhood memories 180–181, 184–186, *184*, 189–190; creating storytelling 186–189; narrating collective memories of migration 181–184
social order 111–114, *112–113*
storytelling 180–181, 182–184, *184*, 189–190; creating storytelling 186–189; narrating collective memories of migration 181–184
symbolism, image 125–126

technoculture 16–18, 24–26; emerging practices of visual technoculture 35–38, *35*, *37*; increasing human–technology entanglements

38–42, *40*; netnography 29–34; noise in data 18–24
theory 4–5; new educational theory 13–15
things 163–171
times of crisis/time crisis 81–90, 94–96, 210–213
transformation 210–213
translation 48–49, 142–143
transnational ethnographic collaborations 134–137, 140–143; crossing borders in 147–148; multi-everything ethnography 137–140; production of ethnographic knowledge 144–147

uncertainty 145–146
unseen, the 120–122
unspoken, the 120–122
visual difference 120–122, 131; construction of the objective 122; data analysis 123; data collection 123; empirical explorations of an academic setting 126–130; and image 125–126; introducing new perspectives 122; publication 124; reframing perception 124–125
visualisations 126–129, *126–130*
visual technoculture 35–38, *35*, *37*
voluntariness of improvising 86–88
vulnerability 152–160

words 125
writing, ethnographic 145–146