

Spring 2007

More than simply "hanging out": The nature of participant observation and research relationships

Julie Frances Simpson

University of New Hampshire, Durham

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholars.unh.edu/dissertation>

Recommended Citation

Simpson, Julie Frances, "More than simply "hanging out": The nature of participant observation and research relationships" (2007).
Doctoral Dissertations. 383.

<https://scholars.unh.edu/dissertation/383>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Scholarship at University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Doctoral Dissertations by an authorized administrator of University of New Hampshire Scholars' Repository. For more information, please contact nicole.hentz@unh.edu.

**MORE THAN SIMPLY "HANGING OUT": THE NATURE OF PARTICIPANT
OBSERVATION AND RESEARCH RELATIONSHIPS**

BY

JULIE FRANCES SIMPSON

B.S. University of New Hampshire, 1997

M.P.A. University of New Hampshire, 2000

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the University of New Hampshire

In Partial Fulfillment of

the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

In

Education

May, 2007

UMI Number: 3260606

Copyright 2007 by
Simpson, Julie Frances

All rights reserved.

INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

UMI[®]

UMI Microform 3260606

Copyright 2007 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.

All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

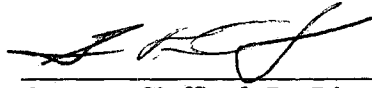
ProQuest Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

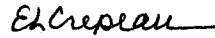
© 2007

Julie F. Simpson

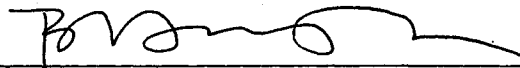
This dissertation has been examined and approved.




Grant L. Cioffi, Ph.D., Dissertation Director
Associate Professor of Education



Elizabeth L. Crepeau, Ph.D.
Professor of Occupational Therapy



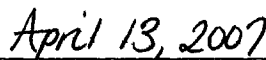
Barbara E. Houston, Ph.D.
Professor of Education



Thomas H. Schram, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Education



Irving Seidman, Ph.D.
Professor of Education, University of
Massachusetts Amherst



Date

DEDICATION

To WOS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The dissertation marks the final stage in the long journey through a doctoral program. I could not have arrived at this point in my journey without the constant support, encouragement, and guidance of some wonderful, incredible people whom it is my honor and privilege to know.

This study would not have been possible without the individuals who participated in my study. I owe them a huge debt of gratitude. Thank you, all, for making the time for my study in your busy lives. Thank you also for sharing your stories with me, and for providing me with feedback and encouragement along the way. Although I may not see some of you again, I greatly appreciate your generosity and willingness to assist me in my work, in a variety of ways.

My appreciation for numerous University of New Hampshire faculty and staff throughout my doctoral program work cannot be adequately articulated here. Ann Diller, Thomas Pistole, Jessica Bolker, and Kathy Cataneo are a few whom I would like to recognize individually for their support and guidance while I embarked on this endeavor. In innumerable ways, you have encouraged and advised me, and you have helped me to grow and to develop as a professional. Thank you for your faith in me, particularly for those times when I needed it most.

My fellow doctoral students, particularly Patti, Bev, Lisa, Jayson, and Cynthia, as well as participants in the education department's Dissertation Seminar, have been sources of inspiration, encouragement, joy, and solace throughout the program. Thank you, all, for your friendship and camaraderie.

I have had the honor of knowing Dr. Irving Seidman for about three years. I met Irv at a New England Educational Research Organization (NEERO) annual conference

where I attended his workshop on qualitative interviewing. As a result of that workshop, I provided him some assistance on a writing project. I was extremely fortunate when he agreed to be on my dissertation committee as he has been an invaluable source of wisdom and support throughout my work. Thank you, Irv, for your ongoing interest in my work, for your encouragement, and for your intellectual guidance. It is a pleasure and an honor to know you, and to have worked with you.

I first met Dr. Elizabeth Crepeau when we worked together on a University of New Hampshire committee nearly ten years ago. We had not worked closely together again until her involvement on my dissertation committee. Not being a student in her department made her agreement to be on my dissertation committee more of a privilege. Particularly in these last few months as the pressure has increased, Betty has been a wonderful, patient, gentle source of support, and very generous sharing her knowledge with me. Thank you, Betty, for your assistance in this endeavor, and for your guidance in my times of need.

I have taken three classes with Dr. Barbara Houston in the course of my doctoral program. As well as being the most demanding teacher whom I have encountered in my academic career, she is also one of the best. All the while expecting students to stretch and challenge themselves intellectually, she is gentle, kind, and full of laughter. I will never forget the semester our cohort spent living and breathing the term “integrity.” Barbara brought all the qualities that make her such a superb teacher and wonderful mentor to her work as a dissertation committee member. Thank you, Barbara, for all that you have shared with me throughout our acquaintance, and for all your guidance and encouragement along the way. You inspired my diligence!

Little did I suspect on entering the doctoral program that I would conduct a qualitative study for my dissertation. Dr. Thomas Schram has been a constant presence in my academic life since I took his qualitative methods class. During that class, he

graciously agreed to be on my guidance committee: I have not looked back since. Tom's incredible generosity with his time and support is invaluable to novice researchers like me: without this level of support and guidance, my research experience would have been a lot more challenging, and much less fulfilling. Thank you, Tom, for everything. You epitomize a great teacher and scholar.

The impetus for my doctoral work came from Dr. Grant Cioffi. Through my work with him in an unrelated capacity, he encouraged me to apply for the doctoral program. Throughout the program, as my advisor, he has been a quiet source of encouragement and support. He was the perfect advisor for me; always there for advice when I needed him but otherwise leaving me alone to get on with my work. Thank you, Grant, for all the time and energy you have so generously invested in me during my doctoral work. Thank you, also, for your belief in me, from the start, that I could achieve this goal.

My family on two continents has been an incredible well-spring of support and understanding throughout my academic career. They have graciously accepted the myriad needs that being a part-time student makes on family members. Their unwavering support has been a quiet source of strength for me. Without their understanding, my journey would have been demonstrably more challenging. Your love and encouragement has been invaluable. Thank you.

My champion and partner throughout my entire academic career as a nontraditional student, and for over half my life, has been my husband, Bill. Throughout our life together, his faith in my abilities has been steadfast, his support - intellectually and emotionally - limitless, his understanding, generous, and, his love, a gift. Without you, Bill, I would not be who I am, or where I am, today. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart. I love you.

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Participant Characteristics Considered Important to Study Goals.....	93
Table 2: Table 2: Characteristics of Participants	100

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
LIST OF TABLES	viii
ABSTRACT.....	xii
CHAPTER	PAGE
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
The Research Questions	1
Personal Interest.....	1
Informed Consent.....	5
Commonplace Notions of Informed Consent.....	5
Legal Notions of Informed Consent.....	6
The Role of Informed Consent in Research.....	8
Informed Consent and Participant Observation	13
Overview of the Study	17
Organization of the Dissertation.....	19
2. THEORETICAL CONTEXT	21
Relationships between Scientists and their Human Research Subjects	22
The Legacy of Positivism	22
Beyond Positivism	26
Evolution of Informed Consent in Research	28
The Belmont Report's Principle of Respect for Persons.....	35
Research Subjects' Informed Consent.....	44

	Participant Observation as a Research Activity.....	52
	The Concept of Participant Observation	55
	Participation in Settings	57
	Participant Observation as a Human Relations Activity.....	65
	Research Relationships.....	67
	Distance in Scientist-Participant Relationships	70
	Conclusion	80
3.	METHODOLOGY	82
	General Description of a Phenomenological Approach.....	82
	Phenomenological Methodology and Research Activities.....	88
	The Nature of Lived Experience	88
	Investigating Lived Experience	89
	Reflecting on Essential Themes.....	103
	The Art of Writing and Rewriting.....	107
	Maintaining a Strong and Oriented Relation, and Balancing the Research Context.....	107
	Limitations.....	108
	Male Perspective.....	109
	Anthropological Perspective.....	109
	Health/Biomedical Sciences Perspective	110
	Participants' Perspective.....	111
4.	PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION AS A RESEARCH ACTIVITY.....	113
	The Essence of Participant Observation.....	114
	Existential	114
	Experiential.....	127

	Multidimensional.....	139
	Situational.....	154
	Processual.....	163
	Conclusion.....	175
5.	PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION: A HUMAN RELATIONS ACTIVITY	176
	The Essence of Research Relationships.....	177
	The Professional/Personal Duality.....	177
	Built on Commonalities.....	188
	Trustful.....	199
	Respectful.....	212
	Reciprocal.....	222
	Conclusion.....	233
6.	REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION.....	234
	The Nature of Participant Observation and Preparing Scientists to Conduct It	237
	Structural Tensions Inherent in Participant Observation.....	237
	Participant Observation as Simply “Hanging Out”	245
	The Nature of Participant Observation and Research Relationships, and The Belmont’s Principle of Respect for Persons.....	252
	Autonomy and the Nature of Participant Observation Relationships.....	253
	The Traditional Concept of Informed Consent and the Nature of Participant Observation.....	266
	LIST OF REFERENCES.....	277
	APPENDIX A IRB Approval Letter.....	293

ABSTRACT

MORE THAN SIMPLY “HANGING OUT”: THE NATURE OF PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION AND RESEARCH RELATIONSHIPS

By

Julie Frances Simpson

University of New Hampshire, May 2007

Participant observation is a research activity used in qualitative inquiry, particularly ethnography, where the aim is to understand the meanings and experiences of social actors. Researchers employing this activity take part in people’s lives as a way of learning about them and their culture, and to gain understanding of social life processes. Often these activities in the field are referred to as “hanging out”: that is, interacting with participants in an uncontrived fashion as they go about their daily lives.

Participation observation is multifaceted: participant observation is conducted within the framework of scientists’ own and others’ life worlds; participant observers try to experience the lives of others to the extent possible; researchers’ relationships with participants, often personally and emotionally involved, are central to success; participant observers are present in the field concurrently in multiple dimensions; the situations that settings present determine, for the most part, researchers’ experiences; and, as situations and participants’ lives unfold, so do researchers’ experiences. In settings, these aspects coalesce to result in many unknowns and complexities for participant observers.

This study examined the lived experiences of scientists who used participant observation as a research activity. Using Seidman’s (1998) three-interview structure, I interviewed twelve researchers about their participant observation experiences. Two

questions central to my study were what meaning do participant observers give to their participant observation experiences and to their research relationships? Phenomenology as my lens allowed me to access the complexity of this research activity, particularly relationships formed for research purpose, from the perspectives of participant observers. I used van Manen's (1990) empirical approach to phenomenological research that involves the interplay of the following six research activities: 1). Turning to the nature of lived experience; 2). Investigating experience as we live it; 3). Reflecting on the essential themes; 4). The art of writing and rewriting; 5). Maintaining a strong and oriented relation; and, 6). Balancing the research context by considering parts and whole.

Based on my analysis of my participants' accounts of their experiences, first I identify and characterize using the following terms five essential themes of participant observation arising from my participants' experiences: existential, experiential, multidimensional, situational, and processual. I then describe essential themes of participant observation relationships. I identify them as having a professional/personal duality, built on commonalities, and trustful, respectful, and reciprocal. Within each theme, I describe constitutive components using my participants' words wherever possible. Following, I explore implications of my findings in two areas and suggest directions for future inquiry: one area concerns the nature of participant observation and the preparation of scientists who engage in it; the second area concerns informed consent in participant observation research.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Research Questions

This study of scientists' experiences with participant observation and relationships in their research provided the means to explore the nature of such experiences, and to understand the meaning that participant observers ascribe to their work and their relationships with participants. Participant observation is a research activity employed in qualitative inquiry, particularly ethnography, where the aim is to understand the meanings and experiences of social actors. In participant observation, scientists take part in the lives of groups of people in order to learn about the lives of those people and to gain understanding of social life processes. They do so by being in settings for extended periods of time, sometimes years, actively participating in the routine and extraordinary activities of the people in those settings (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002). They gather data through observation and gain understanding through intimate relationships with individuals (Sanders, 1980). My two central research questions were

- What meaning do scientists give to their work as participant observers?
- What meaning do participant observers give to relationships with participants formed for research purposes?

Personal Interest

My interest in these questions arose from my work as an administrator of a university Institutional Review Board (IRB). IRBs are the mechanisms by which research involving human subjects conducted by scientists at, or sponsored by,

institutions in the United States is reviewed for ethical considerations. (Throughout this work I use the terms 'scientist' and 'researcher' interchangeably.) IRBs implement federal regulations for the protection of human research subjects (Protection of Human Subjects, 1991). These regulations were crafted originally in the 1970s in response to highly publicized cases of abuse of human research subjects, many of which occurred in the biomedical sciences. As a result, models of scientific inquiry used primarily in biomedical and experimental research have shaped the regulations. The majority of the research reviewed by the IRB that I manage is conducted by scientists in social and behavioral sciences, and a good proportion of it is qualitative in nature. Qualitative research is typically characterized by the following: direct, personal experience in natural settings; the researcher as research instrument; sensitivity to context; and, attentiveness to particulars. It is inductive; fundamentally interpretive; and, inherently selective (Merriam, 1998; Schram, 2006).

In my work, one issue that I face arises from the tension between trying to implement regulations for protecting research subjects and facilitating research. For qualitative research studies in particular, tension arises from interpreting and applying regulatory requirements shaped by biomedical and experimental models of inquiry to studies employing diverse theoretical perspectives, methodologies, and methods. For example, a professor of theater education proposes a study that involves interviewing youth who have attended a summer theater workshop in an inner city setting. She wants to learn about the experiences of these youth in the workshop. Some of the youth are homeless, while others are wards of the state. In terms of participating in the interviews, however, the youth, many of whom are considered "street savvy," are capable of making their own decisions. The theater education professor views the research as presenting no more risk to the youth than they experience in their daily lives; she will simply invite them to answer a few questions about their experiences at the end of the week-long

workshop. The regulatory requirements for involving wards of the state in research, however, require, among other stipulations, that the professor recruit one or more advocates for the youth who are wards to ensure that they are being treated fairly with respect to their participation in the study.

Scientists who conduct qualitative research, particularly those employing participant observation, often accuse IRBs of trying to make social science research conform to traditional biomedical and experimental models of inquiry, and of not understanding the differences between these models and qualitative research methods (Gordon, 2003; Lincoln & Tierney, 2004; Marshall, 2003). As examples, they cite IRBs asking for hypotheses that are being tested in ethnographies, and for lists of questions that will be asked during participant observation. While scientists' accusations against IRBs encompass diverse issues, such as overstating risks that qualitative studies present to subjects, a significant topic of contention concerns informed consent in participant observation.

Before examining this issue, however, I need to clarify that concerns about informed consent in participant observation extend beyond those associated with IRBs and regulatory requirements. A range of perspectives on issues related to informed consent in participant observation, such as the ethics of covert research and the extent of the information that should be provided to subjects, exist within disciplines that traditionally employ this research activity, such as anthropology and sociology. Intra-disciplinary conflicts are often illustrated by comparing statements about informed consent in professional associations' codes of ethics with scientists' accounts of their experiences and justifications for their actions. Further, scientists argue among themselves about a variety of concerns related to informed consent in participant observation, including the ethics of covert research (Fine, 1993; Herrera, 1999).

Informed consent is a key issue in human subjects research as Guillemin and Gillam (2004) explain,

Research involving human subjects starts from a position of ethical tension. In the great majority of cases, research involving humans is a process of asking people to take part in, or undergo, procedures that they have not actively sought out or requested, and that are not intended solely or even primarily for their direct benefit, although in some cases participants may indirectly benefit from the process. From the perspective of bioethics and moral philosophy, this is problematic, because it fails to accord to individuals the respect that they are owed....it involves a violation of the Kantian maxim that people should never be used merely as a means to someone else's end....This tension can be resolved, however, if the subjects of the research take up the goals of the research as their own; they are then not being used as mere means or tools by the researchers....in making the research their own project jointly with the researchers, they become *participants* in the research rather than *subjects*. In practice, the standard way in which this is seen to be achieved is to obtain free and informed consent from participants rather than simply conscripting them. (p. 271)

Scientists at the university where I work employ participant observation regularly in their research. As informed consent is a fundamental ethical consideration for IRBs, my interest in the issue began as a practical concern of how to accommodate scientists' methodological and practical needs in participant observation while ensuring the protection of their subjects and compliance with regulations. For example, how do scientists provide information to participants at the start of the study about the types of data to be collected when they are unknown, or administer written consent forms to everyone about whom data are gathered in a busy setting where people enter and exit frequently, such as hospital emergency rooms.

I identified the primary rationale for most concerns, including for those raised in the literature, to implementing informed consent required by regulations as the difference in the experiences between scientists who conduct participant observation and those who conduct biomedical and experimental inquiry. As a result, I became interested in the nature of participant observers' experiences in the field and the relationships with individuals they form for research purposes. Working on the premise

that most participant observers who enter settings and embark on relationships with participants have high ethical standards, I concluded that I needed to gain a better understanding of the nature of their experiences and their research relationships in order to better conceptualize effective informed consent for participants in such studies.

The literature on participant observers' experiences in settings (what they do as opposed to the results of their research), focuses primarily on the following: practical issues, such as problems related to traditional concepts of informed consent, gaining access, establishing rapport, impression management, role management, and note taking; ethical issues, such as deception, inequities in power between scientist and subject, conflicting obligations, confidentiality, and, engaging in illegal behavior; autobiographical "confessional" tales (Van Maanen, 1988) recounting the hardships of fieldwork; or thematic issues, such as personal inadequacy and social failure (Hume and Mulcock, 2004). (See Goward [1984] for a history and description of publications of participant observers' personal experiences in the course of their research.) I found little written that sought to gain a better understanding of the nature of participant observation and the relationships formed with participants.

Informed Consent

In contrast to the dearth of material on participant observers' experiences, the literature on informed consent is extensive. In the following section, I examine briefly both the everyday and legal notions of informed consent, the role of informed consent in research, and the primary issues that informed consent presents for participant observation.

Commonplace Notions of Informed Consent

Individuals frequently give their informed consent in everyday situations. For example, when a parent signs a permission slip for her child's school field trip, she gives

her permission for her child to go on the field trip based upon the information provided by the school.

Berg, Applebaum, Lidz, and Parker (2001) describe three senses of informed consent. The first is informed consent as autonomous authorization. The authors provide the example of a homeowner who hires painters to scrap paint off her house, prime any bare wood, and paint the house using paint that she selected. They explain that the painters are responsible for painting the house according to specified standards, but not for choosing the paint color nor for the homeowner's choice of them to perform the work. The homeowner is responsible for the paint color. If she selected it without pressure from anyone, then her decision to have the painters paint the house with that color is an autonomous authorization. If the homeowner consults with the painters about her new house color, and/or with her friends and neighbors, then she is engaged in shared decision making. This is a second sense of informed consent. A third sense of informed consent is a policy-oriented or rule-governed practice, in which existing laws and institutional policies define what actions constitute effective informed consent. In this last sense, the focus is on the behavior of individuals who seek consent from others, rather than on the autonomous actions of participants. The three senses of informed consent are separate and distinct, yet interrelated. For example, the rules and policy-oriented sense of informed consent may promote shared decision making and enable autonomous authorization, yet strict adherence to rules governing informed consent may hinder the dialogue necessary for the process of shared decision making.

Legal Notions of Informed Consent

In medicine, informed consent is a formal legal concept. The legal doctrine of informed consent has its origins in medicine, ethics, and law (Berg et al., 2001). The contributions of these disciplines to the conceptualization of informed consent, respectively, are as follows: the nature of the physician-patient relationship and the

advantages that arise from patients who are well-informed about their treatment; the promotion of autonomy and well-being; and the right of bodily integrity and individual autonomy. The legal doctrine of informed consent, which prevails in all American jurisdictions, requires that physicians must obtain the informed consent of their patients before physicians are legally allowed to treat them (Berg et al.). The doctrine places two legal duties on physicians: first, to disclose information to patients, and second, to obtain their consent before providing treatment. Berg et al. assert that the goal of informed consent in medicine is to counter medical paternalism: informed consent enables patients to exercise their autonomy and protect their own well-being as they see fit, even if their decisions are contrary to those of their physicians.

In the legal and ethical literature, disagreement and confusion prevail about the meaning of the term “informed consent.” Lidz and Roth (1983), however, identify five components: 1). the patient/subject must be competent to make the decision about treatment/research; 2). the physician/scientist must provide to the patient/subject all the information relevant to the decision; 3). the patient/subject should understand the information provided; 4). the consent or refusal must be made voluntarily (without coercion or undue influence); and 5). the physician/scientist must respect the patient’s/subject’s decision.

In order to obtain legally valid decisions from patients about whether they agree to treatment, patients must understand the information provided and they must make their decision voluntarily, without undue influence. According to Berg et al. (2001), however, the law remains unclear about whether physicians are required to make sure that their patients understand the information, beyond making sure they are competent, before providing treatment. Further, it is unclear how physicians are to fulfill that obligation. Even if not legally required, patient understanding is an integral component of the concept of informed consent: in order to participate in shared decision making,

patients need to understand the information provided to them. With regard to the voluntariness of patients' decisions, Berg et al. assert that legal discussions focus on pressures and threats by others. The authors observe, however, "Voluntariness is a critical, though ill-defined, concept....While courts have enthusiastically endorsed the dictum that to be effective informed consent must be freely given, they have shied away from the onerous task of giving content and meaning to this concept" (p. 70). Thus what constitutes a voluntary decision remains nebulous.

The Role of Informed Consent in Research

In research, informed consent is a regulatory, rather than a legal, concept. Although conceptually similar, informed consent in research evolved separately from informed consent for treatment (Beauchamp & Faden, 2004; Berg et al., 2001). (I explain the evolution of informed consent in research in Chapter 2.) One reason for this is the difference in the goals of research and treatment. Clinical medical care, treatment, and therapy are designed and intended only to benefit the patient whereas research is intended to contribute to generalizable knowledge. Participation in research is an optional activity which often does not provide any direct benefits to subjects, particularly in the social sciences. The contemporary notion of informed consent in research is scientists' provision of information to their subjects about the study so that the subjects can make an informed decision about whether to participate.

IJsselmuiden and Faden (1996) outline the foundations of the requirement for scientists to obtain informed consent from human research subjects,

[It] has developed through philosophical and religious reflection on the scientist-subject relationship, through the medical research establishment in the pursuit of protecting study subjects, and therefore, in the pursuit of a continued societal license to conduct research, and more recently, through challenges to research practices in courts of law and through consumer activism. (pp. 281-282)

Several commentators have described informed consent in research in terms of its role in the scientist-subject relationship. Ramsey (1970) claims that an informed consent is a “cardinal *canon of loyalty*” (italics in original) (p. 5) that joins scientist and subject in a consensual relationship, a cooperative enterprise, in which both are partners. Although the author acknowledges certain problems associated with consent, such as payment to subjects which might affect whether their consent is freely given, he asserts that obtaining informed consent is a minimum obligation of scientists. He states, “No man [*sic*] is good enough to experiment upon another without his consent” (p. 7). He contrasts this partnership relationship to that of a contractual relationship, but only with regard to consent as an ongoing process whereby the original consent reflects the present activities and that either party may dissent from it in the future. He claims that such a partnership or consensual agreement ensures that subjects will not be “degraded and treated as a thing or as an animal in order that good may come of it” (p. 9). Without informed consent, subjects are used solely as means to the end of acquiring knowledge. Consent enables subjects to consider that use; by agreeing to participate, that use becomes their own end (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Levine, 2004). For Ramsey, informed consent establishes scientific investigation as “a voluntary association of free men [*sic*] in a common cause” (p. 11). Without it, he warns, research would quickly become “inhumane” (p. 11), primarily because of the lure of unknown possible future benefits, and because scientists often believe that their research is important enough to override subjects’ own choices. Thus, for the relationship to be truly consensual, subjects must understand completely the purpose of the research as well as the risks it may present.

Other commentators (e.g., Holder, 1982; Katz, 1972; Levine, 1986; McGuire & McCullough, 2005) propose the scientist-subject relationship as a fiduciary one. In a fiduciary relationship, one person deals with another in circumstances involving a

special confidence and where the overriding duty of the fiduciary is loyalty (Holder). Holder states, "The fiduciary is bound to act in good faith and with due regard to the interests of the person who has bestowed the confidence" (p. 6). Common examples of fiduciary relationships are between attorney and client, or trustee and beneficiary. Levine (1986) concurs, claiming that in research, the consent form acts as a commitment or agreement between the parties. He explains, "This agreement differs in several important respects from the common commercial contract; it is a commitment to form a relationship resembling a fiduciary relationship. The [scientist] is obligated, ethically and legally, to renegotiate this agreement from time to time and in certain specified ways during the conduct of the research" (p. 123). Katz asserts that in contrast to a contract for commercial transactions, there is a higher standard when professionals are involved in the lives of others. He states, "They may be held responsible not only for obtaining the layman's [sic] consent, but also for informing him [sic] of the consequences of their agreement" (p. 521).

In contrast, Wolpe (1998) characterizes informed consent as a contract that emphasizes the primacy of autonomy through subjects giving their free assent to participate in the exchange of goods and services by signing a consent form. If they decide not to sign, they have exercised their autonomous choice and their autonomy has been respected. The author uses as analogies for this contract model the signing of forms for loans, rentals, and licenses. He notes that informed consent was a feature of human subjects research before it was introduced into medicine. He asserts that it arose as scientists began to use larger pools of subjects with whom they were unacquainted and thus there was no basis for trust. Thus, Wolpe proposes informed consent as a contract that arose out of the need for a substitute for lack of trust in impersonal relationships between scientists and subjects.

According to The Belmont Report (U. S. National Commission, 1979), informed consent is the mechanism through which scientists apply the ethical principle of respect for persons. The role of informed consent is thus promoting individual autonomy. The Belmont Report stipulates that the consent process must involve information about the study, as well as comprehension by, and voluntariness on the part of, the subject. Providing subjects with sufficient and understandable information about the study, without coercion or undue influence, enables them to make decisions about participation. Sherwin (1992) explains, "Because of the self-sacrifice implicit in participation in medical research, bioethicists have agreed that it would be exploitive and unacceptable to allow the use of human subjects without their consent. Hence they have been concerned to clarify the criteria necessary to ensure that proper consent is obtained from subjects" (p. 160).

Some skeptical commentators propose that a role of informed consent is to reduce the liability of scientists and their institutions (Beauchamp & Faden, 2004; Levine, 1975). It may be to scientists' advantage in the event of proceedings, legal or otherwise, by subjects against scientists or institutions that scientists document (via a consent form) that they provided appropriate information to subjects upon which the subjects based their decisions whether to participate in research. Levine (1986) attributes the paucity of successful litigation against scientists (compared with practicing physicians) to scientists' formal and thorough documentation of informed consent via consent forms. Documentation of informed consent, can, however, be detrimental to scientists and their institutions when the information provided is later found to be inadequate or false, or when institutional practices designed to protect human subjects are inadequate or ignored.

Berg et al. (2001) claim that another role of informed consent in research is to reduce inequalities of power and knowledge in the scientist-subject relationship.

Undoubtedly scientists always will be more knowledgeable about their studies than their subjects. Concerns raised by imbalances in power and knowledge between scientists and subjects are heightened in some situations, such as when the scientist is also the subject's physician and the research study is the only remaining avenue for treatment. Kuczewski and Marshall (2002) contend this role of informed consent is peripheral as many factors contribute to power dynamics in scientist-subject relationships, such as educational and financial status, and gender, racial, and cultural differences. While scientists' provision of information about studies to subjects may not be a significant contributing factor in reducing inequalities in the scientist-subject relationship, informed consent is central to respecting subjects' autonomy in the face of major inequalities in power and knowledge.

Katz (1972) proposes three other roles for informed consent in research in addition to respecting individuals' autonomy. They are: 1). encouraging subjects' rational decision making by providing them with information about studies and encouraging them to be active partners in the process; 2). protecting the experimentation process by encouraging scientists to question the value of their studies and reducing adverse public reaction to studies; and 3). increasing society's knowledge about research involving human subjects.

Regardless of the role of informed consent in research, it remains a controversial issue for many scientists as a regulatory requirement. Kaufman (1997) observes, "[Informed consent] is a *discursive practice* (italics in original), defined through the myriad ways in which it is produced in local situations. It is not a stable and known fact. Rather, it is an elusive ideal, brought into existence by law and philosophy (Beauchamp and Faden 1995; Arnold and Lidz 1995) and mandated by evolving federal policy.... consent today is a highly problematic construct" (p. 186). Beauchamp and Faden (2004) concur, noting "Indeed, the issue of informed consent has so dominated recent discussions of the ethics of research that one might be led to think erroneously that other

ethical issues (e.g., research design, selection of subjects) are either less important or more satisfactorily resolved” (p. 1281). Such erroneous thinking is the case in participant observation.

Informed Consent and Participant Observation

Although guidelines for informed consent (e.g., U.S. National Commission, 1979) often describe informed consent as a process, informed consent in research is commonly conceived by scientists as a one-time, regulation-prescribed, non-negotiable, written disclosure of required information about a study presented to prospective subjects, and signed by subjects if they agree to participate. This conception of informed consent mirrors the medico-legal model in important characteristics. First, it is a passive activity wherein subjects agree to something that will be done to them. Second, it is seen as a specific event that happens prior to the start of research. Last, the outcome is dichotomous in that subjects either refuse or give consent; there appears to be no negotiation of terms (Knapp & VandeCreek, 2006). According to scientists, certain characteristics of participant observation present challenges for the traditional conception of informed consent. These include its emergent nature; heterogeneity in terms of subjects, roles, relationships, and data collected; and more personal scientist-subject relationships.

Four elements of participant observation contribute to its emergent nature: studying naturally occurring events as they unfold; scientists’ nominal level of control in settings; shifts in research interests arising from unforeseen events; and the emphasis on morally and emotionally involved scientist-subject relationships. de Laine (2000) asserts, “Nothing remains the same in the field. The research design changes, fieldwork sites and hosts change, relationships and even the social world changes, and fieldworkers themselves are changed by the experience” (p. 35). Informed consent is only informed to the extent that scientists know and share information about their studies. For consent to

be fully informed, scientists must be able to foresee the scope and focus of the research (Flinders, 1992) as well as the nature of information to be collected. Such predictability, however, contrasts with the emergent nature of participant observation.

Yet another problem arises from the logistics of trying to get informed consent from everyone about whom scientists collect data in settings where scientists have little control over who enters (Murphy & Dingwall, 2001), such as hospital emergency rooms. Trying to inform everyone who enters a social setting disrupts the natural flow of the setting (Dingwall, 1980) and, according to Bosk (2001), would be “so socially bizarre that it would make fieldwork impossible to complete” (p. 212). This problem is further compounded where the notion of informed consent is of an official form; scientists often view signed forms as bureaucratic and coercive (van den Hoonaard, 2002) and for some subjects, it may be culturally inappropriate. For example, in some cultural settings, individuals historically have been persecuted or exploited after signing legal documents (Marshall, 2003).

Scientists often idealize everyday life as being free from risk or the potential for harm. Thus, scientists may underestimate risk for subjects presented by research in natural settings (versus laboratories), or be unable to imagine potential risk (Bosk & De Vries, 2004). Further, some commentators assert that participation in social science and behavioral research is generally considered by most scientists not to present risk (Boothroyd & Best, 2003; Fluehr-Lobban, 2003). Others (e.g., DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002) argue that scientists often take a paternalistic approach to protecting subjects, claiming that scientists know what is best for subjects. As a result, study information provided to prospective subjects may mask potential risk to subjects. Another form of paternalism arises when scientists do not provide informed consent for fear of disturbing the naturalness and spontaneity of some settings (Fluehr-Lobban, 2003).

Another characteristic of participant observation is its heterogeneity. Not only do participant observers interact with a multitude of people, they play a variety of roles in settings, engage in different types of relationships with individuals, and collect different types of information about subjects. As a result, informed consent requirements, in terms of knowing what scientists are looking for and assuming that they are looking for the same information from each subject, seem ill-suited for participant observation (Irvine, 1998).

Participant observation presents challenges for informed consent because of the types of relationships that scientists develop with subjects. Prolonged involvement in natural settings and the need to participate in settings with minimal disruption often necessitates a type of scientist-subject relationship that departs from the traditionally detached “observer” role. Hume and Mulcock (2004) claim, “Participant observation is primarily an “advanced” exercise in forming and maintaining intimate relationships for professional purposes” (p. xii). Further, some theoretical perspectives, such as feminism, emphasize morally and emotionally involved relationships. This includes changing the concept of individuals involved in research as human “subjects” to being participants or informants, or, in more collaborative models, to being co-researchers.

In most conventional research methods, individuals are generally aware that they are participating in research. In participation observation, however, engaging in everyday activities over an extended period in more personal relationships with scientists may eventually render the research role invisible. While scientists may have declared themselves at the beginning of relationships and asked subjects to sign consent forms, as relationships evolve, subjects may forget scientists’ professional role in the setting (de Laine, 2000). DeWalt and DeWalt (2002) explain, “Fieldworkers rarely recite their informed consent script during an afternoon’s conversations carried out while swinging in hammocks, or while drinking a beer in the bar after a day’s work, or

while in bed with a lover. In fact, if informants were always consciously aware of our activities as ethnographers, the information we acquire would be less rich” (p. 198).

More personal relationships raise the issue of understanding of what is considered public discourse and what is private (Dingwall, 1980; Goodwin, Pope, Mort, & Smith, 2003; Seal, Bloom, & Somlai, 2003), and the extent of observations (Moore & Savage, 2002; Mulhall, 2003). Scientists’ and subjects’ concepts of research-relevant data (Dingwall) may differ significantly. As examples, Goodwin et al. discuss the dilemma of whether to use information overheard in a “confidential” discussion as data in an ethnographic study of expertise in anesthesia while Mulhall questions whether nurses who agree to being observed while giving patient care have, by default, consented to being observed in other work-related situations. More personal scientist-subject relationships present other issues, such as managing the informed consent process while trying to build relationships with subjects and addressing disclosure about the relationship itself. Further, van den Hoonaard (2002) argues that a standardized document for all participants is inappropriate due to the subjective nature of relationships.

Most literature on informed consent in qualitative research claims that the traditional conception is, at best, inappropriate for participant observation. de Laine (2000) describes it as “an ethical ideal that is unattainable in fieldwork” (p. 48) whereas Punch (1994) declares, “Informed consent is unworkable in some sorts of observational research” (p. 90). In contrast to many commentators, however, Howe and Dougherty (1993) suggest that the nature of qualitative research calls for a more demanding informed consent requirement. Herrera (1999) challenges qualitative researchers by asking why participants should “pay for” their “lack of methodological imagination” (p. 334) regarding the challenges presented by informed consent and any attendant risks. Fluehr-Lobban (2003) notes that the developmental nature of scientist-subject

relationships affords numerous opportunities for discussions that “reflect the spirit and intent of informed consent” (p. 169).

As explained above, the traditional notion of informed consent presents a series of challenges to participant observers in obtaining informed consent from their subjects. Many of these arise from differences between assumptions that are foundational to the biomedical (positivist) paradigm on which the informed consent guidelines were based, assumptions generally referred to by the terms “deduction” and “predictability,” and those that are foundational to the studies in which scientists use participant observation, and which are referred to by the terms “induction” and “emergence.” In determining what constitutes effective informed consent for a particular study, scientists need to understand the fundamental nature of the research experience, especially an experience that involves activities that are predominantly relational in nature, such as participant observation. It was to this end that I conducted the study on which I report in this dissertation. In the remainder of this chapter, I provide an overview of the study and an outline of the organization of this dissertation.

Overview of the Study

In conceiving and designing this study, my intention was not to examine how scientists conduct participant observation in terms of the mechanics of the activity, nor to chronicle participant observers’ experiences in terms of illustrating certain issues. Rather, my intention was to explore participant observer’s experiences in a manner that would lead to a deeper understanding of the nature of participant observation and relationships formed for research purposes. My intention paralleled that of Coffey (1999) in her book about ethnography, *The Ethnographic Self: Fieldwork and the Representation of Identity*, which she describes as follows: “My intention is not to be prescriptive of how to ‘do’ ethnographic work. But my comments do indicate a kind of prescription for how we *think* about fieldwork” (p. 157). I wanted to gain a deeper

understanding about the nature of participant observation and research relationships in order to better understand and eventually assess the appropriateness of various conceptualizations of informed consent and critiques of them that stem from a recognition of the uniqueness of participant observation as a research activity.

In order to learn about the experiences of participant observers, I conducted a phenomenological study using Seidman's (1998) three-interview structure.

Phenomenological inquiry questions "the essential nature of a lived experience: a certain way of being in the world" (van Manen, 1990, p. 39). It aims to reveal the structure of lived experiences in order for others to understand the nature and significance of the experiences. Using phenomenology as my lens enabled me to access the complexity of participant observation from the perspectives of participant observers, and particularly their relationships with participants.

This study chronicles the experiences of 12 female participant observers. Four of my participants identified themselves as Latino or Hispanic and the remainder identified themselves as White. All of my participants conducted their participant observation as doctoral students, nine for their dissertation research. Five had experience conducting participant observation prior to the experiences that they recounted in my study. They were trained in a range of disciplines, including education, sociology, sociology and social work, sociology and public policy, developmental psychology, management, and recreation, parks and tourism sciences. The theoretical perspectives employed by my participants in their studies recounted in this study included ethnography, phenomenology, and symbolic interaction.

My participants' studies focused on a variety of populations including children, homeless women, families on welfare, members of fishing communities, health and safety workers, strippers, strip club audience members, and educators. The foci of the

studies included individual, group, institutional, and community levels. Studies ranged in duration from four months to five years.

Organization of the Dissertation

In this initial chapter I have introduced and set the stage for my inquiry. In Chapter 2, I first provide more detailed information on the history of scientists' relationships with their research subjects, and the evolution of informed consent in research. I next examine the primary ethical principle justifying and supporting, and practical issues in implementing, informed consent in human subjects research. I then examine participant observation as a research activity. After summarizing the nature of participant observation, I examine participation in settings via the issues of balancing participation and observation, and role presentations. Finally, I explore participant observation as a human relations activity, primarily through the dimension of distance in scientist-subject relationships, and through viewing them as morally and emotionally involved scientist-subject relationships.

In Chapter 3 I introduce my methodology as well as describe my methods for data collection and analysis. In the first part of the chapter, I provide a general description of a phenomenological approach to research. In the second part, I describe the phenomenological method and research activities that I employed. Finally, I identify several limitations of my study.

Chapters 4 and 5 present my findings. In Chapter 4, I delineate the essence of participant observation as experienced by my participants, based on an analysis of their accounts of their experiences with this research activity. I identify five essential themes of participant observation arising from these experiences, and describe each using excerpts from my participants' accounts. Chapter 5 follows the same format but in this chapter I describe the essential themes of relationships formed by my participants with their participants for research purposes.

In the final chapter, Chapter 6, I discuss some implications of my study in the areas of 1). preparing future scientists and 2). the conceptualization and insistence on informed consent. I also suggest possible avenues for further research.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL CONTEXT

In the previous chapter, I introduced my topic of inquiry as the nature of participant observers' experiences and their research relationships. I explained that my interest in this topic arose from practical considerations concerning informed consent in participant observation research. In this chapter, I examine subject matter important to my study.

The first topic is relationships between scientists and their human research subjects. After examining the original conception of the scientist-subject relationship arising from objectivism and positivism, as well as discussing the influence of different epistemologies and theoretical perspectives on this concept, I trace the evolution of informed consent in research. I discuss informed consent for treatment, and then informed consent in biomedical and psychological research. Following, I examine the primary ethical principle, respect for persons, used to justify informed consent in research. After a brief introduction to principles and autonomy, I examine the concept of autonomy traditionally invoked in human research subjects, as well major concerns voiced in the literature about this concept. Finally in this area, after briefly describing requirements for informed consent in research, I examine standards for disclosure, explore several practical limitations to information disclosure, and present a proposed standard for judging adequacy of information provided to research subjects.

The second topic that I describe is participant observation as a research activity. After introducing the concept of participant observation, I examine a pivotal aspect of

participant observation, participation in settings. I do so in the context of balancing participating and observing, as well as scientists' role presentations. The third and final area that I examine in this chapter is scientists' relationships with subjects in participant observation. Initially, I describe the concept of participant observation research relationships. Then, I examine them in the context of distance between scientist and subject. Finally, I select and examine one type of scientist-subject relationships, *being with* relationships, in order to illustrate complexities and concerns.

Relationships between Scientists and their Human Research Subjects

The Legacy of Positivism

Historically, objectivity has been viewed as a hallmark of scientific knowledge. From this viewpoint, science discovers meaning that is inherent in the objects of inquiry and that that knowledge is free from subjective understandings, such as opinions, beliefs, feelings and assumptions that individuals gain in non-scientific ways. Those holding this view embrace objectivism (Crotty, 1998). Objectivism is an epistemological theory or view that holds that meaning exists separate from the consciousness of the inquirer; an object carries the intrinsic meaning of its kind which can be discovered (objective truth) (Crotty). Objectivism is foundational to the theoretical perspective of positivism which has been a principal philosophy in modern science.

Throughout its history, positivism has assumed various meanings (Crotty, 1998) and impacted diverse areas such as ethics, religion, and philosophy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In science, Guba and Lincoln (2005) identify the following as the basic beliefs of positivism. The ontology that underlies positivism is naïve realism; reality is "real" but apprehensible. The epistemological stance is dualist; there is a knower and a known. Objectivity is possible and what is known is true. The methodology recommended is experimental/ manipulative, seeking to verify hypotheses, chiefly through quantitative methods.

From a positivist perspective, scientists are required to distinguish and keep separate objective, empirically verifiable knowledge and subjective, unverifiable knowledge (Crotty, 1998). This is achieved primarily through a series of procedures known to comprise “the scientific method” that enable a scientist to control reason in order to produce objective knowledge (Polkinghorne, 1989). Through this method, scientists can study a phenomenon at a distance in a disinterested manner, keeping facts free from the interference of values, and thus promoting value-neutral science (Crotty). Positivists deem the results of this process to be objective, rational explanations of how the world really works as they are free from the influence of inquirers’ subjective factors. This method is viewed as the way to obtaining the truth about the world, to produce what Johnson (1975) describes as “a body of knowledge independent of the properties of any particular knowing mind” (p. 17). Crotty explains, “Positivism...postulates the objective existence of a meaningful reality. It considers such meaningful reality to be value-neutral, ahistorical and cross-cultural. It believes that, if one goes about it in the right way, one can identify such reality with certitude” (p. 40). As a result, Wolf (1996) states, “This view of science entails and encourages distance and noninvolvement between the scientist and the researched and assumes that the scientist can objectively see, judge, and interpret the life and meanings of his/her subjects” (p. 4).

Some commentators (e.g., Lincoln & Guba, 2005; Maxwell, 2005) use the term “paradigm” to encompass scientists’ “entire constellation of beliefs” (Kuhn, 1970, p. 146) for a study. In this sense, a paradigm implies a choice of corresponding method(s), methodology, theoretical perspective, and epistemology which ground and guide the research. Historically, positivism has been the dominant paradigm in the natural and physical sciences, such as astronomy, physics, and chemistry. In addition, the life sciences, including the biomedical sciences, have relied heavily on positivism in order to investigate and isolate causes and effects, to measure and quantify phenomena that

occur in living organisms, and to allow the generalization of findings. This includes the study of humans, especially in biomedical research.

The history of biomedical research involving humans parallels the history of medicine as physicians evaluated the efficacy of new treatments and drugs through outcomes (Rotham, 2004). One of the first and most famous examples is that of Edward Jenner, an English country doctor, who tested his hypothesis that cowpox provided an inoculation against smallpox on a young boy in 1796 (Shamoo & Resnik, 2003). In her book, *Subjected to science: Human experimentation in America before the Second World War*, Lederer (1997) chronicles human experimentation from the 1870s to the 1930s and the rise of the medical research establishment. She attributes developments in the medical sciences for creating new opportunities and demands for experimentation on humans. These developments include: the rise of new disciplines of pharmacology, bacteriology, and immunology; the discovery of new technologies, such as x-rays, stomach tubes, and electrocardiography; the transformation of the American hospital from a custodial facility for the indigent into a scientific institution attracting middle and upper class patients; and the epistemological shift making knowledge acquired from hospital patients applicable to private patients.

Lederer (1997) claims that by the 1930s, clinical research and the clinical investigator were part of the academic medical enterprise. Kaufman (1997) concurs, stating “The idea that patient-subjects should volunteer to participate in medical research was accepted well before the Second World War years” (p. 179). The history of scientifically rigorous human experimentation, however, is quite recent, beginning in earnest in the United States in late 1930s (Faden & Beauchamp, 1986). After World War II, despite revelations at the Nuremberg Trials of atrocities committed by Nazi scientists (many of whom were physicians) on concentration camp prisoners, biomedical research grew exponentially in the United States with the government’s “war on disease.”

The history of social sciences' use of human research subjects extends back centuries. Social scientists, such as anthropologists and sociologists, have involved human subjects in their research activities for centuries. According to Wax (1971), "Descriptive reporting of the customs, inclinations, and accomplishment of foreign peoples is almost as old as writing itself" (p. 21). In anthropology, direct observation of groups or institutions in the scientist's own society occurred in Britain and France in the late 1700s. Historically, the more renowned anthropological research involving human subjects has been conducted in exotic cultures, such as Bronislaw Malinowski's studies in Melanesia and Margaret Mead's fieldwork in Samoa. There has been, however, much anthropological research conducted "at home"; in the United States, examples include Powdermaker's work in Mississippi and many studies conducted by American anthropologists focusing on Native Americans (Urry, 1984).

In alignment with positivism's belief in the subject-object dichotomy, traditionally individuals who participated in scientific studies have been referred to as 'subjects.' The term 'subject' in this context refers to the viewpoint that such individuals are the subjects of scientific inquiry or medical experimentation. According to Merriam-Webster's Medical Dictionary (2005), one definition of subject is, "an individual whose reactions or responses are studied." Thus, in biomedical research, and up until relatively recently in much social science research, individuals who participate in research studies have been known as human subjects.

Further, the subject-object dichotomy has resulted in relationships between scientists and the individuals whom they study that are characterized traditionally by: a one way flow of information from scientists to participants, controlled by scientists; detachment and aloofness by scientists towards participants and the context; and, inequities in terms of power and resources between participants and scientists, in the scientists' favor (Blaikie, 1993; Brodsky, 2001). In such relationships, the scientist is the

expert, the researched are subjects, and the study is undertaken primarily for the sake of knowledge production, through which society and the subjects may benefit (Blaikie). This form of scientist-subject relationship has prevailed throughout the history of medical and psychological research, and has been formalized, particularly in the biomedical sciences, through the mechanism of informed consent. In research, informed consent is the practice through which scientists are deemed to be showing respect for their subjects by providing them with the opportunity for autonomous decision making about participation in studies.

Beyond Positivism

Scientists' foundational beliefs regarding ontology, epistemology, theoretical perspective, and methodology influence how they conceptualize their studies; they shape how scientists see the world, their actions in it, and how it should be understood and studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Morgan and Smircich (1980) propose a continuum of approaches to social science from objectivist, at one end, to subjectivist, at the other, that reflects, among other factors, core ontological assumptions, basic epistemological stance, and research methods.

The positivist paradigm is the quintessential objectivist approach on their continuum: the social world is a reality independent of the knower, waiting to be discovered; the scientist is detached from the object of knowledge; theories and hypotheses are tested, often by controlled experimentation; and, findings are ideally generalizable, and provide an objective, value-free portrayal of the phenomenon. In moving along the continuum toward more subjectivist approaches, core ontological assumptions and basic epistemological stances change as do other elements of scientific inquiry. These include: focus and purpose; types of questions that can be answered effectively; orienting concepts; possibility of generalization; role of values; degree of a priori design; setting in which the inquiry takes place; level and locus of control; type of

sampling; methods of data collection; form(s) of data-gathering instrument(s); types of data analysis; assessment criteria; and, reporting modes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Schram, 2006).

In moving from a viewpoint of a singular, tangible reality toward that of multiple, constructed realities and from a knower independent of the known to interdependence between scientists and knowing subjects, the separation between scientists and their human subjects diminishes. Many more subjectivist forms of inquiry are called “qualitative.” While many paradigms can be represented by this term (e.g., interpretivism, feminism, postmodernism, critical inquiry) (Malone, 2003), Denzin and Lincoln (2000) define qualitative inquiry generically as,

A situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible.... qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (p. 3)

Scientists employ qualitative approaches when their purpose is contextualization, interpretation, and/or understanding the perspectives of others. These approaches typically: end with hypotheses and grounded theory; are emergent, descriptive, naturalistic, and inductive; seek patterns, pluralism, and complexity; and advocate a scientist’s role characterized by personal involvement and empathetic understanding (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Qualitative inquiries, primarily through their emergent nature, create a variety of challenges to scientists in fulfilling their obligations to research subjects, particularly in terms of informed consent. In addition, the advent in science of epistemologies other than objectivism and theoretical perspectives that differ from positivism has produced different conceptions of relationships between scientists and the people whom they study. These conceptions are often characterized by emotionally and morally involved

relationships between scientists and their “subjects.” Proponents of reconceptualizations of the scientist-subject relationship argue that the traditional notion of informed consent is, at best, inadequate to meet scientists’ and subjects’ needs, and, at worst, idealistic and impossible to attain.

In the United States, current guidelines for informed consent in scientific research arise primarily from The Belmont Report (U.S. National Commission, 1979) and federal regulations (Protection of Human Subjects, 1991). They were crafted in the 1970s as a result of highly publicized cases of abuse of human research subjects, primarily in the biomedical sciences. Thus, the guidelines are deeply rooted in the positivist paradigm and its traditional scientist-subject relationship. Even in this paradigm, however, scientists question the effectiveness of informed consent in terms of protecting human subjects from harm (Daugherty, 1999; Flory and Emanuel, 2004; Sugarman et al., 1999). The number of studies investigating informed consent issues in experimental and biomedical research continues to grow.

In the following sections, I examine the evolution of informed consent in research, as well as the ethical principle of respect for persons; the latter is the primary justification for informed consent.

Evolution of Informed Consent in Research

In Chapter 1, I identified commonplace notions of informed consent, described briefly the legal doctrine of informed consent in medicine, and outlined the roles of informed consent in research. In this section, first I provide a history of informed consent in medicine and then in research. I examine development of the latter in two dominant areas of scientific research involving human subjects - medicine and psychology. I conclude with outcomes of federal legislation that formalized informed consent in research.

Informed Consent for Treatment. Physicians have obtained some form of consent or authorization from their patients for medical treatment since the 1700s. The notion that physicians must inform their patients about what will be done to them originates in 18th century English law (Berg et al., 2001). The history of the legal doctrine of informed consent, however, began in 1957 when the term was used in the decision in the case, *Salgo v. Leland Stanford, Jr. University Board of Trustees* (Beauchamp & Faden, 2004; Berg et al.). In that ruling, the court focused on the issue of whether the patient's consent had been adequately informed. Decisions in two succeeding cases helped to solidify the legal doctrine of informed consent by specifying the nature of the information that physicians have a duty to disclose to patients; this is primarily the nature and purpose of the proposed treatment, the attendant risks and benefits, and available alternatives to treatment. While subsequent decisions have contributed to the legal doctrine of informed consent, the decisions in these three cases between 1957 and 1960 set the foundation of the disclosure requirement legally required of physicians to their patients (Berg et al.). Throughout the history of the legal doctrine of informed consent, the courts have used self-determination, based on the principle of autonomy, as a primary rationale for requiring physicians to obtain consent from patients, albeit sometimes neglected for, or tempered by, beneficence-based concerns for patient welfare (Faden & Beauchamp, 1986). (For a detailed history of informed consent in medicine, see Berg et al. and Faden & Beauchamp.)

Informed Consent in Biomedical Research. Systematic medical investigation using humans has been documented starting as early as the 1700s (Berg et al., 2001). Up until World War II, it primarily consisted of efforts by individual physicians experimenting with new treatments for individual patients for whom traditional regimes were not effective. As developments in the medical sciences created new opportunities and demands for human experimentation (Lederer, 1997), the primary moral and legal

concern about the involvement of human subjects in research was with regard to their safety or benefit (Faden & Beauchamp, 1986). Faden and Beauchamp assert that there was no broad interest in consent for experimentation prior to World War II. Several cases, however, demonstrate that the idea of disclosure of information and obtaining consent was not unknown (Berg et al.).

In his 1898 study of yellow fever, Walter Reed developed a contract for subjects to sign that resembled a contemporary consent form, including information on risks. After a scandal in Prussia involving experimentation on unknowing subjects, in 1900, the Prussian government developed the Berlin Code, a requirement of which was consent from research subjects. According to Lederer (1997), in 1916 Walter Bradford Cannon, chair of the American Medical Association's (AMA) Council on the Defense of Medical Research, recommended that the AMA amend its code of ethics to include a statement about the need for patient cooperation in experimentation as it did not address the subject of human experimentation. This recommendation was ignored at the time, however, and it was not until 1946 that the AMA's code of ethics addressed a scientist's obligations to a subject. Utilizing documents from World War II plutonium experiments in the United States, Kaufman (1997) states that the idea that patient-subjects should be informed about the purpose of the research was accepted in the research community, although the term "informed consent" was not prevalent. Lederer describes obtaining consent from volunteers for medical experimentation as an ongoing issue during the proliferation of medical research in the United States during the first four decades of the twentieth century, paralleling a concern for consent for medical treatment.

Unfortunately, there is ample evidence that providing information to subjects about experiments and gaining their consent to participate was not common practice. In 1932, the Tuskegee Syphilis Study started. This is the most notorious case of violation of subjects' rights in the history of human medical experimental in the United States. This

40-year long study in nature of syphilis was conducted by the United States Public Health Service, and involved nontherapeutic experimentation on unwitting syphilitic African American males. The event, however, that precipitated contemporary attention on informed consent in research was the Nazi physician trials at Nuremberg (Faden & Beauchamp, 1986). In this historic event, 23 defendants, 20 of whom were physicians, were brought to trial for the atrocities that they perpetrated against concentration camp prisoners in the guise of scientific research during World War II. As part of the judgment against the defendants, the judges established ten basic principles that drew upon moral, legal, and ethical concepts in the conduct of human subjects research (Faden & Beauchamp). Collectively, these principles have become known as the Nuremberg Code. The judges codified as the first principle informed consent as a central requirement for ethical research involving human subjects. This principle states that consent is required to be voluntary, comprehensible, and informed, and the subject competent to consent (Vanderpool, 1996).

The Nuremberg Code was the first codification of ethical principles governing human experimentation widely recognized in the United States. It served as a model for many professional and governmental codes that were developed during the 1950s and 1960s (Faden & Beauchamp, 1986). The next significant event in the development of informed consent in biomedical research involving human subjects happened in 1964 when the World Medical Association (WMA) adopted the Declaration of Helsinki. This code aims to distinguish ethical from unethical biomedical research, and goes into greater detail than the Nuremberg Code, for example, distinguishing between therapeutic and nontherapeutic research, and outlining requirements for guardian consent for cases where subjects are not competent to give consent (The World Medical Association, 2004). Like the Nuremberg Code, however, it makes consent a central requirement for ethical research.

Even after the development of the Nuremberg Code, the Declaration of Helsinki, and the subsequent proliferation of professional and governmental codes in the two decades following the Nuremberg Code's inception (Beauchamp & Faden, 2004), the public in the United States continued to learn of unethical treatment of research subjects involving issues of consent. Two notorious cases in biomedical research during this time frame occurred in New York, at the Jewish Chronic Disease Hospital and the Willowbrook State School: in the former, scientists injected live cancer cells into elderly patients without their consent; in the latter, scientists deliberately infected developmentally disabled children with viral hepatitis based on parental consent that, it has been argued, was coerced and not fully informed (Beauchamp & Faden; Berg et al., 2001). Henry Beecher's 1966 article in *New England Journal of Medicine* cataloguing 22 studies containing serious unethical treatment of subjects, predominantly related to informed consent, fueled the issue.

Informed Consent in Psychological Research. During the 1960s, issues of informed consent in psychological research, primarily deception, also came to a head. The history of informed consent in psychological research in the United States is more abbreviated than in biomedical research. According to Faden and Beauchamp (1986), up until the first published code of ethics in the behavioral sciences, written by a psychologist for the Cornell Studies in Social Growth research program in 1952, psychology did not have any formal standards for informed consent; nor was the term in general use. When the code was published, it contained a consent requirement, demonstrating that there was concern among some psychologists about obtaining informed and voluntary consent from their subjects. The American Psychological Association's (APA) first published code of ethics in 1953 did not use the term but described fully informing research subjects when there was a danger of after-effects. The

APA code also permitted withholding of information (deception) if methodologically necessary, and if there was no danger of after-effects.

In the 1960s, psychologists increasingly employed deception in their studies as demonstrated by published articles reporting its use (Faden & Beauchamp, 1986). Stanley Milgram's obedience studies at Yale University in the early 1960s catalyzed the controversy. In these studies, many subjects were led to believe that they were administering potentially lethal electric shocks to a member of the research team, posing as another subject. Milgram blatantly deceived his subjects, did not administer informed consent, and, some allege, caused some of his subjects emotional harm, though not permanently. In 1967, Herbert Kelman published an influential critical commentary discussing several examples of troubling research involving deception, including Milgram's. He based his criticisms of the studies on the issue of autonomy; that is, use of people without their knowledge violated the respect to which all human beings are entitled (Faden & Beauchamp).

The controversy over informed consent and deception in research continued in the psychology into the 1970s. Zimbardo's prison study at Stanford in 1971 intensified the debate about issues of consent; this time, however, the primary concern raised was not deception but inadequate provision of information about the study, particularly risks (Faden & Beauchamp, 1986). In 1972, the APA formally adopted its *Ethical Principles in the Conduct of Research with Human Participants*; five of the ten principles addressed issues of disclosure and consent. The debate about informed consent in psychological research, however, was not resolved as the code tried to balance the view of informed consent as a moral ideal with concerns about fully informed consent compromising important research and invalidating valuable research findings (Faden & Beauchamp).

1974 National Research Act. The culmination of the cases in biomedical and psychological research noted above, and others, public revelation of the Tuskegee

Syphilis Study in 1972, and concerns in broader society about individual rights, social equality, and an increasingly powerful and impersonal medical establishment (Beauchamp & Faden, 2004) resulted in congressional action in 1974 via passage of the National Research Act. One outcome of this legislation was the establishment of the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research (U.S. National Commission). This commission was charged by Congress to: investigate the ethics of research involving groups of vulnerable subjects, including prisoners and the mentally disabled; examine the system of Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) (boards within research institutions charged with authorizing and overseeing research involving human subjects); and, propose guidelines to be used by IRBs to ensure that research involving human subjects was ethical (Faden & Beauchamp, 1986). The last charge led to the development and publication of The Belmont Report by the U.S. National Commission in 1979.

The Belmont Report (U.S. National Commission, 1979) delineates three ethical principles and corresponding guidelines for application for the protection of human research subjects. The three principles are respect for persons, beneficence, and justice; their corresponding guidelines are informed consent, assessment of risks and benefits, and equitable selection of subjects, respectively. These principles and guidelines are foundational to the federal regulations for protecting human subjects in research. According to Faden and Beauchamp (1986), the U.S. National Commission asserted that the principles not only could be applied to develop the guidelines but also functioned as justification for the guidelines. Accordingly, in The Belmont Report, the fundamental justification for, and principle supporting, informed consent is the principle of respect for persons. Thus, starting in the late 1970s, in the majority of biomedical and social science research involving human subjects governed by federal regulations, the emphasis

has been on informed consent as a mechanism for protecting and enabling autonomous choice by research subjects.

The Belmont Report's Principle of Respect for Persons

In this section, I describe The Belmont Report's principle of respect for persons in terms of its function as the justification for informed consent in research. After briefly describing principles and autonomy in general terms, I examine the notion of autonomy used in the context of human research subjects and outline the major concerns voiced in the literature about respecting the autonomy of research subjects as traditionally conceived.

Principlism. According to Beauchamp (1996), "A principle is a fundamental standard of conduct on which many other moral standards and judgments depend. [It] is an essential norm in a system of thought or belief, forming a basis of moral reasoning in that system" (pp. 80-81). Different interpretations of principles exist. A categorical interpretation of principles, such as that espoused by Kant, is that they hold in all relevantly similar circumstances. Beauchamp and Childress's (2001) framework for use in Western biomedical ethics reflects prima facie principles. Here a principle must be followed unless a conflicting principle outweighs or overrides it in a specific situation. In this sense, principles are abstract guides for what is deemed moral action and are to be used as a framework to guide decision-making about ethical action. This orientation is endorsed in The Belmont Report (U.S. National Commission, 1979),

These three [principles (respect for persons, beneficence, and justice)] are comprehensive, however, and are stated at a level of generalization that should assist scientists, subjects, reviewers and interested citizens to understand the ethical issues inherent in research involving human subjects. These principles cannot always be applied so as to resolve beyond dispute particular ethical problems. The objective is to provide an analytical framework that will guide the resolution of ethical problems arising from research involving human subjects.

In this paradigm, all moral agents have the same rights, duties, and responsibilities, and the same principles and rules govern all decision-making about ethical action. Moral agents use these universal principles as a source of moral guidance and apply the principles to solve moral problems that arise in particular cases (Held, 1990). Principles and rules are invoked in an effort to ensure fair and equitable treatment of all people, relegating aspects such as irrelevant emotions and contextual factors from the decision making process in favor of objectivity and impartiality (Botes, 2000; Cooper, 1991; King, Henderson, & Stein, 1999).

Although expounding upon the criticisms of principlism is beyond the scope of this text, I point out that critics raise a series of theoretical and practical problems rooted in the dispassionate application of abstract principles that ignore contextual and relational factors (Donchin, 2001). Further, others (Callahan, 1984; Dodds, 2000; Donchin, 2000, 2001; Gillon, 1986; Jonsen, 1996; O. O'Neill, 2002; Wolpe, 1998) assert that autonomy has risen to primacy within these frameworks which raises additional issues, particularly in terms of protecting human research subjects from harm. These include: where respect for autonomy of a subject conflicts with the autonomy of other subjects or causes harm to others; where the respect for autonomy conflicts with other principles such as justice: where a subject has little or no autonomy; in situations when it is not possible to find out what a subject would have wanted; and when subjects are in the presence of coercive influences such as being in medical settings or in a diseased state (Wolpe).

Autonomy. Most ethical theories that address autonomy require two conditions for autonomy: liberty, construed as freedom from controlling forces; and, agency, construed as capacity for intentional action (Beauchamp and Childress, 2001). Thus, persons may be deemed to have diminished autonomy where one or both of these conditions is not met, such as prisoners (lack of liberty), persons with severe mental

disabilities (lack of agency), and young children (lack of agency and liberty). According to Beauchamp and Childress, “Personal autonomy is, at a minimum, self-rule that is free from both controlling interference by others and from limitations, such as inadequate understanding, that prevent meaningful choice” (p. 58).

Autonomy is a complex concept which has a diverse range of meanings, including self-governance, individual choice, privacy, and freedom of will (Beauchamp & Childress, 2001). As a result, there are many theories of autonomy focusing on different aspects of human life and the human condition. For example, Miller (1981) proposes four senses of autonomy in medical ethics: autonomy as free action, autonomy as authenticity, autonomy as effective deliberation, and autonomy as moral reflection. These senses of autonomy involve capacities such as understanding, reasoning, deliberation, independent choosing, knowledge of self, and acting according to our values. Some theories focus on the autonomous person whereas others, such as that put forth by Beauchamp and Childress, focus on autonomous choice; some focus on practical requirements for respecting autonomy whereas others propose an ideal of autonomy; some concepts are proposed for specific settings, such patient autonomy in healthcare settings, whereas others attempt to put forth concepts that are more all-encompassing. As a result of this profusion of writing on autonomy, not surprisingly Beauchamp and Childress claim that there appears to be little agreement on the nature, scope and strength of autonomy. O. O’Neill (2002), however, states that in biomedical ethics, “Autonomy has most often been understood as a feature of individual persons. It is generally seen as a matter of *independence*, or at least as a *capacity for independent decisions and action*” (italics in original) (p. 23).

Autonomy of Research Subjects. Notwithstanding the extensive range of understanding regarding the concept of autonomy, in biomedical ethics, and biomedical and social science research, many consider that the Kantian notion of rational, individual

self-rule is fundamental to the concept of autonomy (Gauthier, 2000; Sherwin, 1992). (See O. O'Neill for a contrasting perspective on the origins of the concept of autonomy.) According to Kant, human beings are rational agents; that is, humans are free agents who can self-legislate. Further, he believes that morality is grounded in reason. He argues that because humans are rational agents, they have intrinsic value and accordingly should be treated as ends in themselves, never merely as means to an end. Consequently, individuals show respect for others by recognizing their unconditional worth and their capacity to self-legislate; in doing so, individuals are deemed to be showing respect for each other's capacity for autonomy. Kant (1785/1988) states, "Autonomy then is the basis of the dignity of human and of every rational nature" (p. 65). For Kant, autonomy is the precondition of morality. The Kantian notion of autonomy is absolute (no exceptions), individualistic (without regard to relationship), abstract (situation-independent), universal (applies to everyone), rational (dispassionate), and impartial (without preference to individuals). Not surprisingly, the dominant conception of autonomy used in biomedical ethics and human subjects research is individualistic, abstract, and rationalist (Dodds, 2000; Donchin 2001).

The Belmont Report does not provide a definition of autonomy. In explicating scientists' obligations to human subjects demanded by respect for autonomy (within the context of the principle of respect for persons), however, it reflects Kant's emphasis on rational agency and his imperative that people should be treated as ends in themselves and never as a means only.

The Belmont Report's principle of respect for persons integrates at least two ethical convictions, "First, that individuals should be treated as autonomous agents, and second, that persons with diminished autonomy are entitled to protection." Thus, this principle contains as a key moral requirement respect for autonomy; treating individuals as autonomous agents (and protecting those with diminished autonomy) is to respect

their autonomy. The principle of respect for autonomy requires, Beauchamp (2005) asserts, that “We respect an autonomous agent by recognizing with due appreciation the agent’s capacities and perspective, including the right to control his or her affairs, to make certain choices, and to take certain actions based on personal values and beliefs” (p. 32). The emphasis on respecting autonomy in biomedical and behavioral research ethics in the last three decades is undoubtedly, in part, a response to past paternalistic and harm-causing behavior by scientists toward their research subjects.

Informed consent, the mechanism by which scientists are deemed to be showing respect for research subjects’ autonomy, has been a prominent issue in biomedical and behavioral research since the Nuremberg Trials. There have been numerous cases in the United States where individuals have been involved in research studies without their knowledge, thus violating their autonomy. The more notorious include the Jewish Chronic Disease Hospital cancer experiments, Tuskegee Syphilis study, World War II plutonium experiments, Human Radiation Experiments, and Tearoom Trade Study.

Recognition of subjects’ rights to self-determination granted by The Belmont Report’s principle of respect for persons is viewed by many as an acknowledgement of the power differential between scientists and subjects, and as a preventive measure against paternalism and misuse that some claim has been a feature of medicine and science throughout history. Callahan (1984) states, “[Autonomy] is a value that has served to establish...the right to be spared the paternalistic interventions of those who think they understand my welfare better than I do” (p. 40).

Concerns with Respecting Research Subjects’ Autonomy. The benefits of affording autonomy moral priority include: recognizing individuals’ rights and their personal dignity; erecting a barrier against moral and political tyranny; and, establishing protection for marginalized persons against oppression by the dominant group (Callahan, 1984). In biomedical and behavioral research, however, many argue that

respect for autonomy is neither the single nor correct answer to protecting research subjects from harm. Walker (2002) contends,

Respecting a person's autonomy does not simply mean that adult persons should be free at each and every turn to make decisions for themselves. Respecting a person's autonomy means respecting and sometime protecting, not just their abilities to make choices at particular moments in time, but their abilities and prospects to live autonomous lives over the longer term. (p. 291).

Not surprisingly then, respecting the autonomy of human research subjects raises a number of concerns.

One concern is that the principle of respect for autonomy and the principle-based research ethics framework in general reflects the experience and social status of the framers who are the dominant group and protects their autonomy (Gudorf, 1994; Sherwin, 1996). Gudorf states, "Only dominant persons can afford to be autonomous and guided solely by abstract principles; subordinates need to be relational at many levels to survive" (p. 166). According to this perspective, the difference between autonomous and relational persons is based primarily in power. Decision making delineated in The Belmont Report appears to ignore the values of women and other traditionally oppressed groups, especially those based in relations, including empathy, nurturance, and community, that are of central importance to healing, health, and the welfare of others (Gudorf; King et al., 1999). Determinants of ethical action are abstract and individualistic rather than being derived from situational and relational factors pertaining to the individual persons involved.

Another concern rests on the requirement of the principle of respect for autonomy for scientists to treat subjects as autonomous individuals regardless of their specific needs. Abstraction removes specificity from situations, yet situations that give rise to moral dilemmas are often unique. Thus, some critics argue, it is inappropriate to apply principles developed for situations of sameness to situations that are often

uniquely different (Noddings, 1984). In the research context, and for that matter in many other complex situations requiring decision making about moral action, it is unlikely that two individuals will present exactly the same situation, and relevant contextual factors may be critical in protecting human research subjects from harm (King et al., 1999).

Regardless of the perceived level of autonomy of subjects, most individuals who are seen as autonomous are not totally independent and do not always make rational decisions, especially when they are in pain or have inadequate information (Dodds, 2000). Human beings' interdependence brings to attention concerns of suffering, isolation, abandonment, and neglect, especially when people are vulnerable due to sickness or injury, or other factors, such as economic hardship or age (Carse, 1996). Individuals' decision making capabilities may also vary across time and situations. Individuals deemed to be autonomous at a certain point in time may not be at others, or vice versa, due to the onset of disease or medical interventions. Situations also vary enormously, even in the research context, as to the complexity of the decisions demanded by them. The complexity of a decision whether to participate in an anonymous telephone survey about political opinions differs significantly from that of a decision whether to participate in a clinical trial of a new drug.

In biomedical research, paternalism and coercion that are part of the medical and research establishments (Wolpe, 1998) may unwittingly compromise autonomous decision making abilities of individuals, especially members of marginalized groups and those from non-Western cultures. The power and prestige of the medical profession may influence individuals to accept their physicians' recommendations to enter clinical trials without question, particularly if their options are limited, such as due to cost, availability, or understanding. Wolpe asserts, "Class, race, education, cultural and

religious factors can limit [people's] options, understandings, and perceptions of medical possibilities" (p. 54).

The issues presented above, although not exhaustive, represent the major concerns about The Belmont Report's principle of respect for persons with its emphasis on respect for autonomy. These concerns arise from a variety of factors that characterize the contemporary scientific research enterprise, including heterogeneity of research subjects, increasingly complex nature of biomedical research, and structural inequities between scientists and subjects, such as knowledge and social status. The congressional charge to the U. S. National Commission included investigation of ethics of research involving groups of vulnerable subjects, including prisoners and the mentally disabled. Accordingly, The Belmont Report's authors emphasized the moral obligations of scientists with regard to respecting those persons with diminished autonomy (rational agency). Although this is undoubtedly of great importance in the research setting, in this work I focus on subjects who are considered autonomous according to The Belmont Report.

For research involving subjects who are deemed to be autonomous, the application of the principle for respect for persons (and accordingly their autonomy), described in The Belmont Report, is reflected in practices that ensure that: subjects' decisions to participate in a study, including what shall and shall not happen to them, are made voluntarily; subjects are able to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence; all decisions they make with regard to the research study are fully informed, especially about risks; and, the information provided to subjects is understandable. Further, professional organizational codes of ethics, such as those of the American Anthropological Association (AAA, 1998), American Psychological Association (APA, 2002), and the American Sociological Association (ASA, 1997) assert that scientists are morally obligated to ensure that subjects understand what their

participation in a study entails and that their participation does not result in any harm. Attention to these practices is brought about through the process of informed consent.

As a result, many scientists view informed consent as way of fulfilling their obligations to respect subjects' autonomy. McGuire and McCullough (2005) observe, "In an effort to find moral grounding for informed consent, respect for autonomy has been truncated into a rule of non-interference with informed, voluntary decisions about enrollment in research by those with the requisite cognitive capacities and social freedom" (p. W1). The authors assert that respecting autonomous agents in research entails more than obtaining subjects' informed consent; it involves valuing the individuals and appreciating them as research subjects. Emanuel, Wendler, and Grady (2000) outline five activities they claim respecting subjects entails: 1). respecting subjects' privacy; 2). permitting subjects to withdraw from studies; 3). providing new information about studies or subjects (particularly in the case of clinical research) that arises in the course of studies; 4). monitoring subjects' welfare and providing them with appropriate resources; and 5). recognizing subjects' contributions, primarily through informing them about what was learned in the research.

Other commentators (e.g., de Laine, 2000; Levine, 2004; Macklin, 1999) note a common tendency among scientists to view provision of the consent form itself and getting it signed as meeting their ethical obligations to subjects, and as a panacea against accusations of unethical behavior, particularly in terms of respecting subjects' autonomy. Others view the consent form as a proxy for interaction between themselves and subjects about studies (Berg et al., 2001). Informed consent, however, does not ensure ethical research (Emanuel et al., 2000; Murphy & Dingwall, 2001) and signed consent forms do not constitute informed consent (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Macklin, 1999). About the controversies surrounding informed consent in research, Fine (1993) observes, "The grail of informed consent is at the end of the twisted road of most ethical discussions" (p.

274). Regardless of how informed consent is conceptualized, in research it is the practice through which scientists are deemed to be showing respect for their subjects by providing them with the opportunity for autonomous decision making about participation in research.

Research Subjects' Informed Consent

The Belmont Report (U.S. National Commission, 1979) stipulates that the consent process must involve provision of information about the study, and comprehension and voluntariness on the part of subjects. By providing subjects with sufficient information about the study in language and a manner that they can understand, without coercion or undue influence, they can make decisions about participation. The obligation to disclose information to subjects, according to Beauchamp and Childress (2001), has often been seen as a necessary, and sometimes the sole, condition of informed consent. Nevertheless, disclosure of information is central to the concept of informed consent. The legal doctrine of informed consent in medicine requires physicians to disclose information about treatment. In research, however, disclosure of information by scientists is a regulatory requirement and an ethical obligation, to promote subjects' autonomous decision making. In this section, I examine standards for disclosure, explore several limitations to information disclosure, and present a proposed standard for judging adequacy of information provided to subjects.

Standards for Disclosure. The Belmont Report (U.S. National Commission, 1979) and federal regulations (Protection of Human Subjects, 1991) specify the types of information that must be disclosed to subjects. Ideally, subjects learn about and understand, at a minimum: the nature and purpose of the research, what participation entails, alternatives to participation (if applicable), risks and benefits presented by the study, extent of confidentiality, availability of treatment and/or compensation for injury, voluntary nature of their participation, including that they may withdraw at any time,

and whom to contact for questions about the study. Other information, such as the number of subjects, how subjects are selected, costs to be incurred, consequences of a decision to withdraw and procedures to follow for withdrawal, and any commitment to communicate new findings that may influence a subject's willingness to continue participation, is to be made available as deemed necessary by the situation. The guidelines and regulations also delineate information that cannot be provided to subjects, such as exculpatory language through which subjects are led to believe that they are waiving certain rights, or releasing any parties from liability for negligence (Levine, 2004).

Being "informed", in the context of informed consent, is a function of disclosure. Differing opinions over the particular information to be provided arise predominantly from the lack of clarity about the underlying standards (Beauchamp & Childress, 2001). How is adequate disclosure to be determined? Ethicists and legal scholars have typically considered three standards for judging which norms should govern disclosure: the professional practice, the reasonable person, and the subjective standards (Beauchamp & Childress; Berg et al., 2001; Faden & Beauchamp, 1986; Levine, 1986).

In the first standard, the professional community's typical practices establish the amount and kinds of information for disclosure considered adequate. The duty to disclose, disclosure criteria, and topics and scope of information to be disclosed are determined by the customary practices of a professional community. Using this standard, scientists are charged professionally with protecting research subjects from harm, and must use the correct professional criteria for determining what information to disclose. This standard raises issues in the research context. The primary concern is whether scientists have sufficient expertise to know what information their subjects want to know. Other issues include: the wide range of research goals and procedures, where the goals of the research conflict with protecting subjects from harm, whether customary

standards of disclosure exist within the professional scientific communities, and how much consensus is needed to establish a standard (Faden & Beauchamp, 1986).

The second standard is the reasonable person standard. Here, information required to be disclosed is determined by reference to a hypothetical reasonable person. Whether information is material or pertinent is determined by whether a reasonable person would want it disclosed in order to make a decision about participating in a research study. In this standard, the determination about information needs shifts from the scientist to the subject. Problems with this standard include, specifying the notion of a “reasonable person,” employing the hypothetical reasonable person in practice, and ignoring the unique information needs of individuals that place them, in the context of the study, at risk for harm.

The third standard, the subjective standard, holds that adequacy of information disclosed should be judged by the specific informational needs of the individual person giving consent. Such a standard takes into account the individual, and sometimes unique, information needs that the reasonable person standard does not. This standard is the preferable moral standard of disclosure because it addresses the individual person’s information needs. It is, however, deemed to be impractical for many research studies, particularly those that are short-term and large, involving complex procedures. This is because subjects do not always know what information is relevant for their decision making, and scientists cannot realistically be expected to spend time with individual subjects getting to know them well enough to judge what information would be relevant.

Scientists also justify withholding information from research subjects. For example, in epidemiological studies, scientists justify not obtaining informed consent for access to medical records on the grounds of impracticality (Beauchamp & Childress, 2001). In other types of studies, scientists justify withholding specific information, such

as the purpose of the study. Such withholding is commonly known as deception. Deception is usually justified on several grounds. These include: if subjects knew the information, they would refuse to participate; due to the type of information being collected, such as stigmatizing or illegal behaviors, subjects would provide false information; and, knowledge of the information will influence subjects' behavior to the extent that the research objectives will be compromised.

The guidelines for informed consent permit the use of deception in research in certain situations. Generally, the research must not pose substantial risk to subjects, withholding information will not adversely affect the rights or welfare of subjects, the research could not be carried out with withholding the information, and wherever possible, subjects are provided with information at the end of the study explaining the deception, and provided an opportunity to withdraw from the study (by not having their data used in the study) (Protection of Human Subjects, 1991). Use of deception in research remains controversial, and continues to be debated, sometimes virulently, in the literature.

Limitations to Disclosing Information. Although The Belmont Report (U.S. National Commission, 1979) and federal regulations (Protection of Human Subjects, 1991) specify the types of information that must be disclosed to subjects, what does it mean to be "informed" in the context of informed consent? O. O'Neill (2002) claims that "Full disclosure of information is neither definable nor achievable; and even if it could be provided, there is little chance of its comprehensive assimilation" (p. 44). Levine (2004) concurs, observing that if the criterion of "full disclosure" is invoked, then informed consent is an impossible goal. Freedman (1975) asserts, "No lengthy rehearsal of the absurdities consequent upon taking the term "informed consent" at face value is necessary. The claim has been made, and repeated with approval, that "fully informed consent" is a goal which we can never achieve, but toward which we must strive" (p. 33).

Providing complete information about all of the many conceivable considerations that might be important to all possible human subjects is unrealistic. Yet, even if scientists adopt a more realistic approach to information disclosure, issues with informing subjects remain. They include: the type and amount of information provided; the availability of information; knowing what subjects want to know about the research; and scientists' communication skills.

One issue in disclosing information is the type and amount of information to be provided. In the majority of research, the relevant information may be too technical for subjects to evaluate, or processes being studied may be unfamiliar to subjects. In biomedical research, another problem is how much disclosure of information is beneficial and how much is harmful to subjects' well-being (Kaufman, 1997). Kaufman asks, "How much information about [the research] must be or should be disclosed to subjects for research to be considered "ethical" and for subjects to be "truly" or "fully" "informed" (Gotay, 1991; Schain, 1994)? And how much information is considered overwhelming for the [subject]?" (p. 185). This issue may be complicated by the emphasis on the often lengthy forms containing complex language used by scientists which, some argue, (e.g., Bhutta, 2004), are required by IRBs and lawyers to provide legal protection for scientists, sponsors, and institutions. The Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments, in assessing the attitudes and experiences of persons who had participated, or were likely to be recruited to participate, in biomedical research found that many subjects reported receiving too much technical information that was hard to read and understand in consent forms, as well as being given an overwhelming amount of information (Kass & Sugarman, 1996). Particularly with regard to potential discomforts or risks presented by the research, Levine (1986) notes that there are dangers from both overdisclosure, such as confusion or intimidation, and underdisclosure, such as incorrect choices about participation.

A second problem is that information about aspects of the studies may not be fully ascertainable at the beginning of the study. Examples include, subjects' experiences in the research, subjects' reactions, and how the data might be used. This is particularly true of naturalistic inquiry, where outcomes are often not known at the beginning, nor are the types of data that might be collected. In qualitative social research, Guillemin and Gillam (2004) observe, "The potential harms to participants...are often quite subtle and stem from the nature of the interaction between researcher and participant" (p. 272). Sometimes such information cannot be conceived of ahead of time, let alone explained adequately to subjects.

Another issue is that scientists do not know what subjects want to know, including the type and quantity of information, in order to consider themselves informed as this varies among individuals (Kaufman, 1997). Within the realm of all the conceivable information that scientists could provide to subjects, that which is relevant and of value to each individual subject is indiscernible to them. Scientists, who are intimately familiar with the topic under study, may have difficulty empathizing with subjects who have problems understanding information about the study, particularly if it is complex and technical in nature (Berg et al., 2001). In clinical research, getting informed consent from subjects is often delegated to other research personnel who may not be able to clarify subjects' concerns (Berg et al.). This matter may be exacerbated by the fact that informed consent is not a concept familiar to many individuals and thus they may not know what information to seek. Kaufman states, "In most circumstances, consent is not understood by patients from the research and regulatory perspective that investigators take for granted. Consent is simply not part of the background knowledge or cultural world (Gordon 1994) of most medical patients or potential research subjects" (p. 186).

Scientists themselves are another factor impacting information disclosure in terms of: the amount of time spent interacting with subjects about the study; their communication skills; their attitudes toward the consent process (Kaufman, 1997); their attitudes toward prospective subjects in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, class and other characteristics (Kuczewski & Marshall, 2002); and where their allegiances lie with respect to being more study-oriented (for example, focus on outcomes, potential gain from research, benefits for future subjects) versus being more subject-oriented (for example, subjects' well-being or best interests).

Regarding the limitations to information disclosure discussed above, and others, Levine (2004) concludes, "In short, there is no universal agreement on standards for disclosure or on what it takes for a person to have *sufficient knowledge* to give *informed consent*" (italics in original) (p. 1287).

Knowing Enough to Make an Informed Decision. If fully informed consent is a chimera, what are the considerations for judging the adequacy of "informed" consent in research? Freedman (1975) argues that informing subjects is not a fundamental requirement of valid consent. Rather, it is derivative from the requirement that consent be the expression of a responsible choice. He claims,

The basic mistake which is committed by those who harp upon the difficulties in obtaining informed consent (and by critics of the doctrine) is in believing that we can talk about information in the abstract, without reference to any human purpose....The proper question to ask, then, is not "What information must be given?" That would be premature: we must first know for what purpose information is needed. *Why* must the [subject] be informed? Put that way, the answer is immediately forthcoming. The [subject] must be informed so that he will know what he is getting into, what he may expect from the [research], what his likely alternatives are – in short, what the procedure (and forbearance from it) will mean, so that a responsible decision on the matter may be made. (pp. 33-34)

Thus, information is, according to Alexander Capron (as cited in Freedman) "necessary to make meaningful the power to decide" (p. 34).

In order for subjects to make a decision about participation in research, they should receive all the information about the study that they need to make an informed decision about initial and ongoing participation. As this will differ among individuals, the minimum amount of information disclosed should be based on the reasonable person standard. Then, in the process of negotiating informed consent, scientists should attempt to learn from subjects what else they would like to know (Levine, 1986). Thus, this model is the reasonable person standard augmented by the subjective standard. In survey research, for example, where subjects spend a nominal amount of time answering questions about non-sensitive topics, often without any contact with a scientist, the reasonable person standard should guide disclosure of information. Scientists should strive for the subjective standard, particularly when the research presents risk to subjects, and when the methodology facilitates it. For example, for the former, when subjects' lives may be at stake in clinical trials, scientists would be obligated to spend the time with each subject necessary to find out what information each subject needs and wants. For the latter, in a study involving participant observation where scientists engage in activities with participants and develop personal relationships over an extended period of time, they gather the requisite knowledge over time and have the opportunity to disclose information according to the subjective standard.

Due to myriad issues concerning informed consent, only a select few of which I have presented above, Kaufman (1997) contends,

Consent cannot be reduced to a monolithic fact or static entity; it is not a discrete set of behaviors amenable to legislation from afar. Rather, consent is produced in local worlds of research, institutional evaluation, and [scientist-participant] interactions. It is an evolving concept and practice. The actual form consent takes vis-à-vis any particular study is shaped by those contexts as well as by the attitude of the [scientist] toward the consent process, his or her communication skills with potential subjects, subjects' perceptions of the study and their role in it, and the local politics of approving, and then conducting, [a study]. Contemporary understandings of consent and practices of acquiring

consent are variable and malleable, and they contain a great deal of ambiguity. (pp. 189-190)

I turn my focus now to participant observation as a research activity.

Participant Observation as a Research Activity

In this section, I examine participant observation as a research activity. First, I introduce the concept of participant observation. Then, after discussing one characteristic of participant observation that makes it unique among research activities – the requirement for scientists to actively participate in settings – I examine two issues arising from participation that raise practical and ethical issues, and have implications for informed consent. They are: the need for scientists to balance participating and observing, and the necessity of multiple role presentations by scientists.

In participant observation, scientists take part in the lives of groups of people as a means of learning about their lives and to gain understanding of social life processes. They do so by being in settings for an extended period of time (for anthropology, this is usually a minimum of a year whereas other disciplines do not appear to have established any such parameters) and actively participating in the routine and extraordinary activities of the people in those settings (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002). They gather data through observation and gain understanding through intimate relationships with actors (Sanders, 1980).

In the literature, participation observation is referred to as an approach, a strategy, a method, a methodology, a technique, a process, a design, and an analytic tool. It is often described as “hanging out” due to the inordinate amount of time scientists spend informally observing and participating in activities of daily life in settings. Although it has a long history dating back to the 1800s, Bronislaw Malinowski, a British anthropologist, was the first scientist to describe the use of participant observation in research (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002; Wax, 1971). In sociology, participation observation

was developed and codified as a technique by a group of social scientists at the University of Chicago immediately after World War II (Adler & Adler, 1987).

Until relatively recently, participant observation was employed within the positivist paradigm in some disciplines. Chicago School sociologists advocated immersion in settings but assumed peripheral roles in order to maintain the subject-object dichotomy (Hunt, 1989). Tonkin (1984) explains, "In sociology, it first proclaimed the possibility of a species member observing its own species, so that people-watching could be as detached, unobtrusive and scientific as bird-watching. In this positivist extension of the naturalist's paradigm, the aim is to interfere as little as possible, to be a "fly on the wall"" (p. 216). Since the 1980s, however, participant observation has been used primarily in more subjectivist paradigms across a variety of disciplines (Adler & Adler, 1987). The advent of other theoretical perspectives, especially feminism, phenomenology, and critical inquiry, has resulted in a shift in the conceptualization of the context of participant observers: scientists initially seen as extrinsic to the social settings they study have come to define themselves as members of those settings. This shift has resulted in a heightened interest in the ways that participant observers interact, and the nature of the relationships that they enter into, with actors in settings, including redefining research roles in response to issues of relative power, especially with subjects who have been traditionally marginalized (Angrosino, 2005).

Rarely is participant observation the only research activity employed in a study (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002); frequently, scientists combine other activities, such as formal and informal interviews and archival data analysis, in order to gain a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon of inquiry and to aid in their interpretation of social action. Collectively these activities are commonly referred to as "fieldwork", particularly in cultural anthropology.

Participant observation has consequences for the relationships between scientists and their human research subjects, as well as implications for informed consent. Informed consent is only informed to the extent that scientists know and share information about their studies. The idea that information about a study be fully known and disclosed to subjects in advance is in direct contrast to the idea of discovery as the driving force behind inquiry (P. O'Neill, 2002). Scientists must be able to anticipate with a high degree of certainty the extent and focus of the research (Flinders, 1992) as well as the type of information to be collected for consent to be fully informed. This predictability is at odds with the emergent nature of much naturalistic (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) inquiry (Fine, 1993; Murphy & Dingwall, 2001), and the view of participant observation being serendipitous (Whyte, 1984). Irvine (1998) argues that the prescience required by informed consent in terms of knowing what scientists are looking for and assuming that they are looking for the same information from each participant seems absurd for fieldwork. Further, van den Hoonaard (2002) claims that the potential heterogeneity of participants in a setting renders a standardized document for all participants inappropriate as does the complexity and specificity of any one situation that may arise in naturalistic inquiry. Mattingly (2005) concurs, stating, "The notion that tricky ethical matters can be handled by a single set of universal standards (embodied in a legal-sounding document) is itself problematic. Such an approach is likely to raise ethical issues of even weightier proportions than it solves" (p. 455). Finally, although naturalistic inquiry aims to obtain knowledge from the individual other's point of view, there are many different viewpoints in any setting and these get contextualized and interpreted during the research process. This, in conjunction with trying to anticipate any single individual's reaction to seeing herself, her actions, and her ideas described and interpreted in textual form, is difficult to describe to potential subjects (Hoeyer, Dahlager & Lynøe, 2005).

The Concept of Participant Observation

Goffman (1989) describes participant observation as “getting data...by subjecting yourself, your own body and your own personality, and your own social situation, to the set of contingencies that play upon a set of individuals, so that you can physically and ecologically penetrate their circle of response to their social situation” (p. 125). As such, participant observation affords empathetic understanding of the meaning given to social action in settings; such understanding occurs when scientists are able to understand actions as those in the setting experience them (Johnson, 1975).

According to Bradburd (1998), experiences in settings which shape scientists’ understandings of others consist of a process of “being brought up short, of having expectations confounded, of being forced to think very hard about what is happening, right now, with me and them, let alone the thinking and rethinking about those experiences when they have – sometimes mercifully – passed” (pp. 162-163). It is through this dialogic process of building meaningful models of the worlds of others which are then constantly altered through interactions and encounters with them that leads to understanding those studied.

Grills (1998a) states, “There is no adequate substitute for the direct engagement of activities and acts of the other if we wish to understand the practical accomplishment of everyday life” (p. 6). Here, he emphasizes the importance of joint action in engaging in that which is social. Atkinson, Coffey, and Delmont (2003) expound,

Participant observation is significant not just because the researcher can “see” things happen. It rests on something much more fundamental: it is possible by virtue of the human and social capacity we have – as ordinary actors – to engage with our fellow men and women, and through practical and symbolic transactions with them to acquire some degree of understanding of them. It rests on the capacity we have, as a basic precondition of everyday life, to take the role of the other, in achieving at least a partial perspective on the social world and on ourselves from the point of view of others. It also rests on our ordinary (but extraordinarily skilled) capacity to learn from the social world about us: to learn languages and other symbolic forms, to acquire abstract knowledge, and

to develop and practice skills. It also depends on our ability to reflect upon ourselves as objects of knowledge. We are, therefore, able to engage with other actors and in new social settings with reflective self-knowledge. These capacities are ordinary aspects of our everyday competence as social actors. (p. 115)

Thus participant observation is a way to document the practices of everyday life, the performances of social actors, and the conduct of social encounters among players in a setting. Such documentation is, however, itself social action in that scientists are themselves social actors who observe what goes on, narrate it, and then try to interpret it (Mulhall, 2003). As such, participant observation is much more than simply a data collection activity. It involves understanding of social life through, “the interpretation of meaningful and intentional social action; an understanding of the social organization of concerted social activity; [and], an analysis of the local realization of generic social processes” (Atkinson, Coffey, & Delamont, 2003, p. 113).

This conceptualization of participant observation emphasizes several commitments (Atkinson, Coffey, & Delamont, 2003). One is to the significance of the collective and to the social sphere, not just the accounts of individuals. A second commitment is to the complexity of social life and its processes, including the many forms through which it is “coded and performed” (p. 114), such as actions, stories, texts, and artifacts. The participant observer’s role is to make sense of this multitude of actions in their various forms. Another commitment is to the temporal domain of social worlds which “encompasses the unfolding organization of sequence, tempo, and coordination” (p. 115). A fourth commitment is to understanding the organization and symbols of social worlds. These commitments combined with the capacities outlined in the above quote from Atkinson, Coffey, and Delamont facilitate scientists’ understanding of social worlds and social action in a given setting.

Carrithers (2005) identifies two other commitments for fieldworkers: one, cognitive, is to the “quintessentially unpredictable experience itself” (p. 437) in that all

description or interpretation must be grounded in the fieldwork process itself; and, the other is existential, to the experience of being in an often unfamiliar setting and to being open to others and relationships with others, and what knowledge can be gained through those relationships. In order to stress the existential and moral dimensions of the experience Carrithers (1992) proposes the phrase “engaged learning” in contrast to the term participant observation. He explains,

[Scientists] learn how people judge each other by being judged themselves, or by being so closely a part of the scene that they react directly, intimately, and inwardly, often with discomfort and perplexity, to people’s judgments of each other. So [scientists] are forced to learn about aesthetic standards in much the same way that children do, using the same equipment. (p. 148)

Participant observation is multifaceted; it is, at its core, an intellectual activity but one that requires emotional and physical engagement in order to fulfill its purpose.

Participant observation is essentially a process of socialization (Sanders, 1980). It is quintessentially a human activity in that scientists develop relationships with a group of individuals who are often unknown to them prior to the study (Bosk, 2001). This aspect of participant observation is one that constitutes it as unique among research activities and is necessitated by another characteristic that contributes significantly to its uniqueness, the requirement for participation in settings.

Participation in Settings

The need for scientists to actively participate in settings rather than conduct their studies as detached observers watching from afar raises a host of practical and ethical issues which have been discussed widely in the literature. In this section I focus on two of the myriad issues that participation in settings presents: the ongoing balance between participating and observing, and the necessity of multiple role presentations by scientists.

Balancing Participating and Observing. Participant observers have a dual purpose in settings: first, to engage in the activities of the setting, and second to observe as much as possible that occurs (Spradley, 1980). Thus, scientists have to become involved in settings, both with the people and the activities, yet retain enough distance to be able to observe and document. According to Fox (2004), the ongoing balance between participation and observation is “a dynamic equilibrium between participation and observation – a continuous balancing and rebalancing of involvement and detachment” (p. 314). Merriam (1992) describes it as a schizophrenic activity. Other commentators (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994; Bosk, 2001; Clifford, 1983; de Laine, 2000; DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002; Hume & Mulcock, 2004; Tedlock, 2003; Tonkin, 1984; Wolcott, 1999) have described this element as oxymoronic and paradoxical, primarily due to the tension presented by the requirement of both involvement and detachment, closeness and distance; the need to develop trust and rapport with subjects yet maintain enough distance to be able to collect, analyze, and interpret data critically.

Several commentators have proposed typologies to help understand different participant/observation orientations in settings. Gold's (1958), grounded in observation, was one of the first. His typology includes: complete observer, where the scientist does not interact in the setting and whose role is not known; the observer as participant, where the scientist's role is known and where the scientist participates in the occasional interview and more formal observation in the setting; the participant as observer, where there is mutual awareness of the scientist's role but where the scientist is an active participant in the setting; and, the complete participant, where the scientist's research role is concealed and the scientist pretends to be a participant in the setting (commonly known as covert research).

Adler and Adler (1987) propose a typology based more on membership roles than on the degree of observation and participation, although undoubtedly their typology

does integrate this aspect. Their typology includes: peripheral membership, where scientists are marginally involved in the activities of the group under study and generally do not assume functional roles within the group, for a variety of reasons; active membership, where scientists take part in core group activities and take on functional as well as social roles in the setting; and, complete membership, where scientists immerse themselves in the setting completely, sometimes to the extent of abandoning their research role.

Gans (1982) proposes a typology based on scientists' level of emotional relationships formed with subjects. His typology includes: total participant, where scientists are completely involved emotionally in a social situation and only after it is over do they resume their research role; researcher participant, where scientists' personal involvement in social situations is partial so that they continue with their research role; and, total researcher, where scientists have no personal involvement in situations, such as attending public meetings.

Freilich (1970b) and Spradley (1980) present continua for levels of participation. Freilich's ranges from "zero" participant through privileged stranger, marginal native, make-believe native to temporary native. Similarly, Spradley's ranges from nonparticipation (no involvement) to complete participation. Spradley notes that progression from nonparticipation to moderate or active participation is often a function of the amount of time in the setting and gains in knowledge of what others do. His category of complete participation relates to situations where scientists are already ordinary participants in settings; it implies neither concealment of the researcher role (as does Gold's [1958]) nor loss of the observer role.

Although these schemas differ somewhat in their foci, they all address the degree of participation in a setting. (Some [e.g., DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002] do not consider any orientation that does not involve participation or observation [e.g., the extremes in

Gold's (1958) typology and the first two categories in Spradley's (1980) continuum] to be germane to the discussion of participant observation as either participation or observation are not part of the activity.) Gold's and Adler and Adler's (1987) typologies present undoubtedly idealized categories of how scientists are oriented in settings. In reality, the degree of observation and participation changes as scientists enter settings, spend time participating, experiencing life as it unfolds, and then eventually leave. Factors that may determine degree of participation and level of social integration include scientists' initial status(es), if any, length of time, and roles in the setting, actors in the setting and scientists' personal characteristics (DeWalt & DeWalt).

Thus, utilizing Freilich's (1970b) and Spradley's (1980) notion of continua and modifying them to reflect full participation (no observation) and full observation (no participation) at the extremes, along which scientists move back and forth constantly throughout the duration of the study, depending on a variety of factors, is probably a more realistic picture of actual practice than a fixed or static orientation (Emerson, 1981; see Pope 2005). Gans (1982) describes how, throughout his study of Levittown, he continually tacked back and forth among his orientations of total participant, researcher participant, and total researcher, depending upon the situation that presented itself and the people whom were present. For example, he went from total participant, when participating in the Saturday morning "bull" sessions with neighbors while mowing their lawns, to researcher participant, while attending parties where he could steer conversations to his topics of interest, to total researcher, when he attended a public meeting. Due to the issues that involvement in settings can raise, Wolcott (1999) cautions,

As a general guideline, it seems preferable to stay on the cautious side, becoming only as involved as necessary to obtain whatever information is sought. Operating with that level of restraint allows a researcher to help everyone else to remain conscious of the research *role* as the work

continues, rather than risk having someone later complain about having been misled by a pretense at involvement. (*italics in original*) (pp. 48-49)

Role Presentations. Another feature that arises from the need to participate in settings is the involvement of role presentations by scientists. According to LeCompte, Schensul, Weeks, and Singer (1999), a role is “a position within a social structure that is defined by the obligations and responsibilities assigned by the [setting] to that position and the expectations that other people have for how the person occupying that role should think and behave” (p. 4). Harrington (2003) explains that roles are “the vantage points from which researchers observe events in the field and interact with participants” (p. 602).

Roles are part of everyday life; when studying in settings, however, scientists usually take on additional roles (role taking), formal and informal, implicit and explicit, specific to their research activities, including those that link them into a variety of relationships (de Laine, 2000). They may include roles such as volunteer, coach, church member, and/or friend. LeCompte et al. (1999) claim that the most appropriate role for participant observers is that of helpful learner in order to legitimize their constant watching and question asking.

The ways scientists' roles are defined and carried out have different advantages (and disadvantages) and result in different data (Brodsky, 2001; Harrington, 2003; Johnson, Avenarius, & Weatherford, 2006). For example, some roles provide access to situations whereas other roles make gathering data difficult. Rarely are scientists afforded the opportunity to choose their roles in settings; their roles are influenced by a variety of factors, including the setting, initial status in the setting, personal factors such as characteristics (e.g., age, gender), abilities and theoretical orientations, subjects themselves including degree of intimacy with, level of participation/involvement in the setting, focus and context of the study, and context-specific circumstances. For example,

Davis (2001) describes how, in her study of a hospital when she was in the emergency department, she was mistaken for a receptionist, a patient, and an employee; nurses often associated her with management, and also, because she was researching technology, a computer expert.

Scientists who study within their own settings face different challenges with regard to explicating their new role within the setting and subsequent potential role confusion or ambiguity for their subjects (Davis, 2001; e.g., Goodwin et al., 2003). Goodwin (Goodwin et al.) reports on her experience assuming a research role in a setting (anesthesia) where she had been a professional (nurse) for five years. She noted she was privy to informal conversations among anesthesiologists, as she had been as a nurse, and often wondered if anesthesiologists were talking to her as a researcher or a nurse whom they had known for five years. Although they may opt to take on specific roles (role playing), in reality scientists have little control over how these roles are played out, especially with regard to their subjects (Freilich, 1970a; Harrington, 2003; Mitchell, 1991).

Further, scientists' roles change as relationships with their subjects develop and circumstances change; roles are formed, managed, and sustained (Atkinson, Coffey, & Delamont, 2003). Roles, like degrees of participation and levels of membership, should be seen as constantly changing, rather than as abstract and static (Shaffir, Stebbins, & Turowetz, 1980) as they are shaped by a dynamic process among scientists and their subjects, involving, in part, negotiation and renegotiation, and expectations and behaviors (Angrosino & Mays de Pérez, 2000) between self and others in context (de Laine, 2000).

Scientists commonly balance and carry out many roles simultaneously. These may be differentiated in terms of the amount of participation and observation, level of intimacy, and insider-outsider status (de Laine, 2000). Some roles may result in ethical

and practical dilemmas, especially where roles overlap (de Laine). Peshkin (1984) claims that the “false fronts” (p. 258) presented by scientists in the form of roles played constitute part of the deception that is the *sine qua non* of fieldwork. He described how, through trying to develop rapport in order to get his participants to “drop their masks” (p. 258), he manipulated his behavior, “blending in like a chameleon when invisibility was in order and appearing in this or that posture when I needed to produce a particular effect” (p. 258). He states that such deception varies to the extent that scientists practice it, and are aware and acknowledge that they employed it. In contrast, Cottle (1977) views role playing as not inherently inauthentic; rather, he claims that the role and what it demands of the scientist may cause feelings of deception. de Laine comments that deception is a fact of life and also in participant observation, but that scientists have a moral obligation to act responsibly when conducting their studies.

Accordingly, role presentations require a high level of self-understanding by scientists in order to know when to assume a certain role, their own limits in role-taking, when to subordinate their own interests in the interests of the role, and to judge the effectiveness of a role and how to adjust it accordingly. Some roles may necessitate scientists discard behaviors and expectations that are part of their normal roles (Bositis, 1988). Shuttleworth (2004) describes feeling “ethically uneasy and a little anxious” about purchasing the services of sex workers for the key participant in his study about the pursuit of sexual intimacy by men with cerebral palsy; he also worked for this man as his personal assistant. Scientists need to be flexible and creative with roles and relationships, and to be prepared to adapt behaviors to meet the requirements of specific situations (de Laine, 2000).

Active participation in a setting over an extended period of time inevitably will affect the scientist-self. Scientists are part of what they study and will be affected by their experiences in settings (Atkinson, Coffey, & Delamont, 2003), the relationships

they develop, interactions with the researched (Zajano & Edelsberg, 1993), and the knowledge gained through those relationships (Clarke, 1975), including about themselves (de Laine, 2000). At a very basic level, scientists bring to settings their human selves and their research selves (Freilich, 1970b) which may end up being antagonistic, especially in terms of the human conscience and commitments against the desired research neutrality and detachment (de Laine; Hume & Mulcock, 2004; Peshkin, 1984). For example, Beckerleg and Hundt (2004) describe the physical and emotional toll that they experienced studying the lives and health needs of women heroin users in a coastal Kenyan town. In addition to dangers presented by studying an illegal activity, they had to handle the emotional pressures presented by participants who are often in distress, frequently require money or other assistance, and sometimes die. Such tension may be complicated further by the fact that the human self is a familiar, relatively unproblematic role with established rules whereas the researcher role is often strange, threatening, and complicated, requiring behaviors that may challenge the former (Sanders, 1980).

As a result of constantly actively participating in a setting and the lives of others, balancing observing and participation, and managing a series of roles, participant observation is often emotionally, intellectually, and physically draining. Atkinson, Coffey, and Delamont (2003) state,

Fieldwork is not a passive activity. We actively engage in identity (re)construction, and this is not simply an instrumental process. The actual lived experience of conducting fieldwork confronts, disrupts, and troubles the self. This argument takes us beyond simple understandings of appropriate or fruitful roles to a much more sophisticated and realistic appreciation of the intimate relations of the field. Thus fieldwork can reconstruct, restore, or rewrite identity and sense of self; fragment or challenge the self; and provide new and different ways of understanding the self. Prolonged fieldwork has emotional connectedness. (p. 55)

As such, participant observation is viewed as being highly personal work that, although rewarding and productive, can result in intense feelings of self-doubt, confusion, and anxiety (Hume & Mulcock, 2004).

With the rise of participant observation's employment in more subjectivist paradigms, the personal aspect of the work increasingly has become a topic for discussion and deliberation in the literature (Emerson, 1981). Further, more recently scientists have broadened their discussions of participant observation from focusing on the primary concerns of process and method to address an aspect of the activity (Angrosino & Mays de Perez, 2000) fundamental to its success; relationships with participants. This fact is evidenced by de Laine (2000) who describes participant observation as "a technique that leads to the formation of relationships for designated ends" (p. 19).

Participant Observation as Human Relations Activity

Relationships are complex phenomena and research relationships are often more so given the additional aspects of balancing participating and observing, and role taking or playing, that scientists have to manage throughout their relationships. In this section, I examine relationships formed by scientists with subjects during participant observation. After discussing research relationships formed during participant observation very generally, I explore relationships between scientists and their subjects in terms of an element fundamental to scientists' active participation in settings – the distance between scientists and their participants. I then examine one of several proposed conceptualizations of participant observation relationships – *being with* – that calls for the lessening of social and emotional distance between scientists and their subjects.

According to Carrithers (2005), the production of anthropological knowledge depends on the creation of relationships between scientists and subjects, and what is

learned through these relationships, such as language, appropriate behavior, both in general and individual-specific, and the ability to evaluate and appreciate performances, is as significant as what is gathered through systematic inquiry. This necessity for relationships leads Robinson (2004) to conclude, “Participant observation” is not simply a research technique: it rests on the human capacity to form relationships, and it entails a struggle to maintain some degree of reflexive distance without violating those relationships” (p. 155).

The recognition of the pivotal role of scientist-subject relationships in participant observation has been a relatively recent phenomenon. The literature is replete with accounts of a wide variety of relationships among scientists and their subjects in studies employing participant observation, including those that are considered exploitive (e.g., Humphreys, 1975), collaborative (e.g., Whyte, 1993), friendships (e.g., Tillmann-Healy, 2001, 2003), traumatic (e.g., Vanderstaay, 2005), and intimate (e.g., Irwin, 2006).

In conjunction with the introduction of more subjectivist epistemologies and theoretical perspectives, the recent focus on scientist-subject relationships has spawned debates about the nature of relationships between scientists and their subjects; scientists no longer assume that they need to remain detached from their human “subjects.” Further, more recently, commentators have argued that the term “subject” has colonialist connotations and is no longer appropriate (e.g., Angrosino, 2005; Angrosino & Mays de Pérez, 2000). As a result, scientists have co-opted other terms for those whom they study, particularly in qualitative inquiry. Lee (2001) provides useful distinctions among such terms: *subjects* are objects of study, unable to influence the direction of the study; *informants* willingly provide information and influence the study in terms of providing or denying access to their knowledge or experiences; *participants* gather and/or analyze data, review transcripts, provide feedback on drafts, and may hold the scientist accountable to present their voices and/or perspectives; and, *collaborators*

are co-researchers who participate in open and equal collaboration, and who share responsibility for data collection, analysis, interpretation and reporting. In keeping with these characterizations, I will use the term “participant” in the rest of this text to denote individuals about whom scientist gather information during participant observation.

Research Relationships

In this section, after examining relationships between scientists and their participants in a general sense, I explore them through an element fundamental to scientists’ active participation in settings - the distance between scientists and participants.

Before I proceed with describing scientist-participant relationships in participant observation, I want to briefly outline several concerns that participant observation relationships present for informed consent. One issue is that in participant observation, prolonged participation by scientists in settings engaging in everyday activities over an extended period in more personal relationships may eventually make the research role invisible. Scientists have to balance the need for collecting data with issues raised by frequently reminding participants about the study. Periodic reminders about a study and the voluntary nature of participation raise the specter that participants may act unnaturally, be less forthcoming with information, and/or may withdraw from the study. More personal relationships raise the issue of what information is considered appropriate for public revelation versus that which is private. Related issues include the scope of observations (Mulhall, 2003) that are relevant for research, as well as different conceptions among scientists and participants about research-relevant data (Dingwall, 1980). Other concerns for the traditional notion of informed consent presented by personal scientist-subject relationships include, getting informed consent while developing relationships with participants, and addressing disclosure about the relationship itself.

Relationships are a set of interacting processes that take place over time between individuals who know each other (Hinde, 1996). They can be categorized along a variety of dimensions, including content, diversity, qualities, relative frequency and patterning, and reciprocity versus complementarity, of interactions, conflict and power, self disclosure, interpersonal perception, commitment, and satisfaction with the relationship. Relationships are dynamic, with different processes being significant in different relationships. According to Hinde, "Relationships involve communication. Communication is indeed the essence of relationships" (p. 9). In addition, as relationships are between human beings, they are constituted by "emotions, hopes, regrets, wishes, and so on" (Hinde, p. 9). Thus relationships are multidimensional.

Relationships also are developmental in nature in that they are ongoing and evolve over time, constantly changing in response to circumstances (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Hall, 2000; Hinde, 1996; Maxwell, 2005; Seal et al., 2003). Further, relationships require constant negotiation and renegotiation as they develop (Maxwell). Zajano and Edelsberg (1993) describe their changing scientist-participant relationship over the course of their study. From the participant's perspective, the scientist was progressively seen as: suspect stranger, cordial acquaintance, welcome guest, expert resource, valued colleague, and confidante. The changes altered the scientist's role as participant observer, her access to data, and the way she constructed and interpreted data during the study. Further, their behavior changed as trust was established; they went from fear of revealing incompetencies and hiding uncertainty to openly acknowledging problems and dilemmas. Brodsky (2001) explains, "Relationships are created and negotiated through the small and large decisions made and the behaviors that follow at all stages of the process, from entrée and negotiation of the project through the final writing of reports and exit from the setting" (p. 329).

Historically, distance between scientists and their research participants has been viewed as necessary in order to maximize neutrality and objectivity. Different social science perspectives promote a range of different scientist-participant relationships; perspectives vary, however, as to the “ideal” type of relationship. Tillmann-Healy (2003) proposes friendship as a method of inquiry; she characterizes friendship as an investment in participants’ lives, not just a way to get further access, where confidentiality and informed consent are ongoing negotiations. Punch (1986) claims that participants should be viewed as collaborators and treated as one would a friend or acquaintance. Wax (1980) argues that such relationships should be reciprocal where the “exploitative intent of the [scientist] is matched by that of the hosts, who are initially in a strong position to define the terms of interaction” (p. 35).

Such perspectives appear to be somewhat simplistic in that they are perceived as ideal relationships for scientists with all participants in all settings. Missing is the consideration that a relationship is between two individuals, thus participants have a significant role in determining the nature of the relationship. Furthermore, in most settings, scientists engage in webs of relationships where individuals interact with each other constantly rather than developing isolated, separate relationships. Thus, idealistic academic perspectives appear to ignore the complexity of human relationships, including their developmental nature and multiple dimensions, and the realities presented by settings, heterogeneous subjects, and aims of the study. Wong (1998) writes of his experiences conducting field work in a workfare program and how his intentions for relationships with participants changed as he was “seduced by the “friendship rapport”” (p. 181) that developed, and as he endeavored to gather data to meet his research aims. Claims that research relationships need to be of a certain type are in direct contrast to the evolutionary and multidimensional nature of human relationships, as well as to the myriad types of relationships formed in everyday life.

The perspectives referred to above appear to advocate a general shift in research relationships from “objective” detachment to emotionally and morally involved, interactive relationships; the former seek to maintain distance between the actors whereas the latter recognize and value any interactions, research-related or otherwise (Brodsky, 2001). Commenting on the latter, de Laine (2000) notes, “A significant moral issue at the heart of fieldwork practice in social science is the call for more participation and less observation, of being with and for the other, not looking at” (p. 16). This decision differentiates between being a traditionally detached scientist (*looking at*) and being emotionally and morally involved with participants (*being with*) and is, according to de Laine, a moral decision. Such a decision involves relating to participants in ways that approach equality and mutuality rather than those that involve dependency or hierarchies of power and authority (Friedman, 1993).

The traditional *looking at* stance of scientists – detached, identifiable as outsiders – allows participants to distinguish clearly scientists and to be cognizant of being in a study during interactions with them. *Being with* requires scientists to develop relationships with participants, relationships with attributes such as emotional involvement, reciprocity, and affective interactions, and relationships in which the relationship is an end in itself. This interpretation of *being with*, it can be argued, corresponds with the general tenets of the ethics of care and some theoretical perspectives (e.g., feminism) with regard to preferred scientist-participant relationships.

Distance in Scientist-Participant Relationships

In this section, first I examine the concept of distance in scientist-participant relationships in terms of emotional, moral, and personal involvement. Following, I describe the attributes of *being with* relationships, as well as some of the concerns raised by these types of scientist-participant relationships.

A fundamental difference between *being with* and *looking at* orientations is the proximity of scientists to their participants, in terms of emotional, moral, and personal involvement. Distance in terms of emotional, moral, and personal involvement differs from the distance needed by scientists for critical analysis and interpretation of data gathered in settings. Both *being with* and *looking at* stances require the latter in order to maintain the intellectual distance needed to undertake critical analysis of the events and relationships in which scientists participate in settings; without it, scientists are said to have “gone native” wherein they internalize the reference groups as their own and disengage from the research agenda (de Laine, 2000).

There are a variety of factors that impact the distance between scientists and their participants, including the stability of settings, types of settings (e.g., formal organizations, communities), scientists’ length of time in settings, and scientists’ initial status in settings. There are also many axes of value, such as aesthetic, intellectual, experiential, physical, temporal, and emotional (Booth, 1983) by which to measure the distance between scientists and their participants. Scientists’ primary concern with regard to their proximity to participants is its impact on the amount and type of data accessed.

Personal characteristics, such as gender, age, physical features (e.g., body size, hair and skin color), visual identity, culture, class, and education (LeCompte et al., 1999) may facilitate or impede data collection through the distance they create between scientists and their participants, and ultimately, the willingness of participants to trust scientists (Cottle, 1977). Whyte (1984) explains,

The participation of the researcher in the activities of the people being studied will be shaped in part by the degrees of difference in cultural background, race, or ethnic identification between the field workers and the study subjects. Where these differences are minimal, the researcher may be accepted almost as native. Where the differences are large, participation opportunities will be more limited. (p. 28)

Participants may judge scientists on their personal characteristics, such as age and weight, as well as on their visual identity markers (e.g., clothing, cosmetics, bodily decoration). Some characteristics or markers might offend or lead participants to make assumptions that impact distance (LeCompte et al., 1999). Further, scientists' patterns of behavior, beliefs about the world, preferences, skills, and ways of looking at the world also affect presentation of the self, potentially impacting distance with participants. Telfer (2004) recalls of his study, "Some suggested that my quiet, easygoing demeanor assisted with my entrée and acceptance into the field, along with my commitment to honesty and openness. This meant being clear about what I would and would not, or could not, discuss" (p. 80).

Social distance between scientists and participants is often "plotted within an over-arching, shared, social framework" (Hall, 2000, p. 129). The distance between Hall and the homeless teenagers whom he studied was apparent and understandable to all from the outset. They knew what to make of him by the way he talked, walked, dressed; all these actions were cultural indicators of difference. As a result, he had to work through the influence of those that promoted distance as part of building relationships. This was the task of working through "familiar differences" (p. 130). Further, the age difference made for a certain distance initially, and an ongoing distinction, but one where distance receded through time spent with participants in the setting.

Colic-Peisker (2004) described her experiences as a Croatian émigré living in Australia investigating the values and identities of two postwar waves of Croatians immigrants in Australia. These waves were separated by age, class, and diversity of experiences. As a Croatian, she was viewed as an 'insider' and had her own networks and contacts. Being able to communicate in a language and dialect subjects recognized was critical in the émigré community accepting her as a researcher. As a result, she claims that being a "linguistic insider" is a minimum requirement for "serious ethnographic

fieldwork” (p. 90). For one wave of immigrants, distance was created by her higher level of education, comparative youth, short amount of time in the country and, in terms of the male participants, gender. In the second wave that included friends and acquaintances, distance was created when she inserted the researcher role into what were private, pre-existing relationships.

Scientists often engage in ‘impression management’ in order to play down differences and to minimize distance with subjects in areas that they can affect. For example, scientists may alter their appearance or the way they talk and the words they use. Some characteristics, however, cannot be altered, such as gender, skin color, and age. LeCompte et al. (1999) note, “In many cultures, older people are granted a status and respect that younger researchers cannot enjoy” (p. 33). Thus, scientists have to be aware of how such characteristics may create distance with participants and impact access to information, and what strategies they can employ to minimize said distance. For instance, cultural norms for appropriate gender behavior can create distance or be constraining; scientists may find it difficult to discuss issues of intimate concern with persons of the other gender (LeCompte et al.). Rowling (1999), however, reported that in her bereavement research, all participants, male and female, told her that her gender lessened the “distance” between them. Wong (1998) describes his efforts to minimize the distance with the female participants in the welfare program that he was studying,

During the course of the research, I found myself sliding across our differences of race, gender, class, sexuality, nation, language, and research positions to gain a sense of rapport and relationship. This was made more difficult as we had no shared basis of similarity to move across differencesso I found myself playing down our differences and, at the same time, shifting to our humanity as a basis of rapport. This helped me to coalesce our relationships and form some ground for respect, trust, and friendship. Very soon, I would be forgetting my role as a researcher and using all my interpersonal skills and tricks to downplay differences and strike a common chord between us. (p. 188)

Blackwood (1995), a Western White woman scholar studying in the Far East, consciously fulfilled the expectations of women within the village by protecting her reputation and not engaging in “male” activities such as smoking, drinking, or gambling, in order to minimize the distance between them. Further, she hid her lesbian identity, assuming that, in a Muslim country, she wouldn’t be accepted as such. She identified herself as unmarried (which she was) and allowed others to assume that she was heterosexual, maintaining a story about a fiancé in order to discourage unwanted male advances and marriage proposals. As a result of these impression management strategies, she reported that she had many identities which she “tacked back and forth between” (p. 58) but into none of which she felt she fitted; that she always felt a distance between herself and her participants, as well as physical and emotional isolation. As illustrated by Blackwood’s case, impression management strategies may take a toll on scientists if they require manipulating significant elements of a person’s identity for an extended period of time.

A fundamental principle of participant observation is that scientists gain understanding of those whom they study through engaging with them (LeCompte et al., 1999). Part of engaging with participants involves getting them to share their lives and talk about their experiences. LeCompte et al. argue that participants will be much more likely to do this if they “feel that the researcher can share in and empathize with the difficulties and joys attendant to those experiences” (p. 8). This involves scientists being empathetic. Rowling (1999) contends that empathy is needed in order to understand participants’ meaning and experiences. She states, “That is, the researcher is not detached – ‘out’ of the research – nor ‘in’ in the research by being enmeshed in the participants’ experiences” (p. 176). She notes, however, that “being in and being out of the research is a fine line” (p. 177). Scientists’ empathy will be more authentic if they have had similar experiences (LeCompte et al.). Conveying similarity in experiences,

however, requires self-disclosure by scientists; the opening up of part of their private selves. Busier (Busier & Pigeon, 1999) describes how in her study of anorexic women, two participants told her that had she not revealed to them at the beginning her experiences with anorexia, they would have felt uncomfortable talking about what they considered to be private lives. Thus, proximity in experiences provided a level of safety for participants to share. As illustrated by Busier, such disclosure may be rewarding in terms of data gathering; it may be threatening, however, to some scientists and/or methodologically inappropriate if seen as jeopardizing detachment and thus possibly scientific credibility.

Being With Scientist-Participant Relationships. In the final section of this chapter, I examine the concept of *being with* relationships between scientists and participants. My aim in doing so is to illustrate a type of scientist-participant relationship that has been invoked by some commentators as more appropriate in qualitative research, and differs from that which has been envisioned historically. I am not, however, advocating for these types of relationships in participant observation. As I have pointed out throughout this chapter, there are many factors that determine the types of relationships between scientists and their participants including the scientist, the participants, the epistemological, theoretical, and methodological assumptions of the study, the topic under study, the setting, the time frame for the study, and the ways in which the activities are carried out in the setting. Further, although I am inclined to believe that most participant observers enter settings and embark on relationships with participants with high ethical standards, scientists vary in how they perceive their obligations to participants.

At the heart of the call for scientists *being with* instead of *looking at* their research participants is the lessening of social and emotional distance between scientists and their research participants. Historically, emotional involvement with subjects has

been viewed as dangerous to analytical ability, reflecting an objectivist epistemology that views the conflation of intellect and emotion as damaging to scientific credibility (Gearing, 1995). The justification for this reconceptualization of the scientist-participant relationship is twofold. de Laine (2000) explains,

The feminist challenge to modern fieldwork methods...is underscored by a belief that the key to ethically and morally responsible fieldwork resides with participating more fully in social relations and playing the role of detached observer less. What is consciously eliminated from participant-observation relations...is social distance between the researcher and the subject....Whether to develop social relations in personal and intimate ways and play the role of observer less is an ethical and moral matter as well as a methodological choice. (p. 110)

Scholars, including critical theorists and feminists, have argued the traditional positivist detachment constitutes poor research practice because it inhibits the development of rapport that is critical for understanding others (LeCompte et al., 1999). Oakley (1981) contends, "Personal involvement is more than dangerous bias – it is the condition under which people come to know each other and to admit others into their lives" (p. 58). Further, de Laine (2000) states, "The traditional absolutist ethical model that favours impersonal relations and objective, rational, intellectualizing of problems seems less able to address the actualities of fieldwork in social science than ever before" (pp. 16-17).

In addition to the methodological justification for more personal scientist-participant relationships is the practical reason; detachment and dispassionate engagement in social settings, especially long-term, is impossible to achieve in reality. de Laine (2000) argues, "Long-term immersion in the field is a total experience that demands all of the researcher's resources – intellectual, emotional, political, intuitive, and moral. [It] makes problematic any notion of the identity being compartmentalized into, on the one hand, an 'analytic psyche' and, on the other, a feeling human being with likes and dislikes, fears and concerns" (p. 18).

Being with suggests a different expectation for scientists in their relationships with participants with regard to emotional proximity. Gilbert (2001) notes that emotions are part of entering the worlds of others; she states, “[Emotions] guide our interpretations of what we experience and are shaped by our life experience” (p. 10). Thus, it has been argued, emotional proximity with participants is integral to participant observation. Although, historically, scientists have viewed emotional involvement as a problem to be avoided, more recently emotions have been recognized as important, both for understanding oneself (e.g., Goleman, 1995) as well as for understanding aspects of social life, particularly the experiences of others. The discussion has shifted in science, especially social science, from avoiding emotions to awareness and intelligent use of them in the research process.

Kleinman and Copp (1993) view fieldwork as emotion work. The authors outline a two-stage model of feelings: a short period of anxiety and distance followed by closeness. They caution that scientists often expect to have only good, positive feelings; that they feel uncomfortable about sexual or romantic impulses and try to ignore or suppress negative feelings. They suggest that participant observers become more aware of their feelings and use them as data. They state, “Ignoring or suppressing feelings are emotion work strategies that divert our attention from the cues that ultimately help us understand those we study” (p. 33). Accordingly, emotional proximity with participants is seen as desirable, even necessary, as long as it is managed so that scientists do not become overwhelmed by their participants’ emotional issues. Rowling (1999) describes “being alongside” participants and “with” them as opposed to being “out” of the research (detached) or “in” the research (submerged) in order to overcome such dilemmas.

Scientists need to recognize the continuous interaction among the personal, the emotional, and the intellectual aspects of their work (Davis, 2001) resulting from the reconfiguration of scientist-participant relationships called for in *being with*

relationships. Fox (2004) argues that scientists need a set of the skills for conducting field research that includes the capacity to “empathically recognize the connection between “self” and “other” (pp. 311).

de Laine (2000) writes that ethical dilemmas in participant observation often arise from “overlapping roles, relationships, and the interests, expectations, allegiances and loyalties of parties concerned” (p. 17). Such concerns have led scholars to question the desirability of greater intimacy in scientist-participant relationships. Kirsch (1999) observes, “[They] may inadvertently reintroduce some of the ethical dilemmas they sought to avoid: potential disappointment, alienation, and exploitation of participants. As researchers and participants get acquainted, establish trust, and form friendships, they become vulnerable to misunderstandings, disappointments, and invaded privacy” (p. 26).

Stacey (1991) claims that the relationships, engagement, and attachment called for by feminists are potentially exploitive in that they “place research subjects at grave risk of manipulation and betrayal” (p. 113) by scientists. She states, “Fieldwork represents an intrusion and intervention into a system of relationships that the scientist is far freer to leave than the subjects. The inequality and potential treacherousness of this relationship is inescapable” (p. 113). She continues, “The irony I now perceive is that ethnographic method exposes subjects to far greater danger and exploitation than do more positivist, abstract, and “masculinist” research methods. And the greater the intimacy – the greater the apparent mutuality of the researcher/researched relationship – the greater is the danger” (p. 114).

Stacey’s comments stem from scientists’ emotional, moral, and personal involvement with participants. When *looking at* participants, scientists and their purposes for being in settings are, for the most part, identifiable. A *being with* stance and multiple roles, including those of friend, however, may result in participants’

confusion about scientists' purposes and, particularly in situations of in-depth and long-term contact with scientists, their losing sight of the research agenda. Emotional proximity and personal relationships that are friend-like in nature may lead to a variety of issues. de Laine (2000) explains,

Friendships in the field may foster more effective and ethically responsible treatment of people (individuals are treated as total human beings, with feelings and emotions), but social relationships formed in the field on a base of sharing personal experiences and shared fate can lead to more intimate topics and issues being discussed, the potential for more abuse from probing, and breaches of confidentiality with disclosure and publication. (p. 112)

Other issues include: wrestling with the paradox of developing emotionally and morally involved relationships for research purposes; becoming morally and emotionally involved with individuals whom scientists find morally or socially objectionable; addressing the logistics of developing such relationships with heterogeneous participants; meeting participants' needs in the relationships; and handling relationships when leaving the setting.

The complexity of moral and emotional relationships further complicates participant observers' task. They need to decide on the attributes that fulfill research aims, how to develop relationships reflecting these attributes, and how to reconcile *being with* some participants and not others with regard to research aims. Scientists also have to consider how to reconcile any dissonance between intended and resultant relationships, especially for key participants. Glesne (1999) further cautions that *being with* relationships may lead participants to share information that is "problematic at best and dangerous at worst" (p. 119). Such sharing presents scientists with the dilemma of deciding what information may be used as research data. Due to the complexity of such scientist-participant relationships, we can appreciate Wolcott's (1999) caution to scientists who embark on participant observation to become "only as involved as necessary to obtain whatever information is sought" (p. 4).

Regarding this shift to more emotionally and morally involved relationships Colic-Peisker (2004) comments, “Deconstructing the myth of the noninvolved objective observer is like shaking off a heavy burden: instead, our research now requires us to be conscious of the ways we are involved and engaged with our research participants, and to find strategies for ethically managing that engagement” (p. 85). Thus, we can see from the issues raised in this chapter, that accompanying the call for more morally and emotionally involved scientist-participant relationships is the need for better understanding of participant observers’ experiences in order to help address the multitude of challenges that their chosen research activity, and the resultant relationships present, particularly for informed consent.

Conclusion

Participant observation requires scientists to concurrently observe and participate, to the extent possible, in the social action that they are attempting to study. By being present, actively participating in the experiences and interactions occurring, and by engaging in personal relationships with individuals in settings, scientists can get closer to experiencing and understanding the points of view of participants. At the same time, scientists have to maintain the intellectual distance necessary to critically analyze the experiences in which they engage. The scientists’ resulting anomalous identity, for themselves and participants (Hume & Mulcock, 2004), as well as the emergent nature of participant observation, presents challenges for scientists in terms of fulfilling their obligations to research participants, particularly in terms of informed consent as traditionally conceived. These challenges are exacerbated by the call for more emotionally and morally involved scientist-participant relationships. Even those scientists who approach their studies with the highest ethical standards claim that the practical issues of implementing informed consent, as traditionally conceived, presented by participant observation are daunting. Understanding the nature of the experiences of

participant observers, and their research relationships is critical to reconceptualizing informed consent for this research activity, with the goal of protecting participants from harm presented by the research. It is to this end that I conducted the study outlined in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

General Description of a Phenomenological Approach

The purpose of my study was to understand the nature of participant observation and the relationships formed by scientists with participants for research purposes. Central to this purpose was to learn about the experiences of participant observers in their research, and the meaning they make of their experiences. In light of my aim to understand the meaning of a lived experience in context, I selected phenomenology as the methodology for this study.

According to Munhall (2001), “Phenomenology questions the consciousness of us, as we are in the world, how we experience the world, and how we give meaning to our experiences. Meanings and interpretations emerge from our situated context and provide for heterogeneous perspectives of life’s events” (p. 180). Phenomenology aims to reveal the essence or structure of lived experiences in order for others to understand the nature and significance of the experiences (van Manen, 1990). Using phenomenology as my lens allowed me to access the complexity of participant observation, particularly relationships formed for research purposes, from the perspectives of scientists who have engaged in this research activity.

Phenomenology has a rich history dating back to the 1700s where the term first appeared in philosophical writings (Moran, 2000; Moustakas, 1994). It is also a diverse field of study which can be divided in a variety of types of phenomenology, including transcendental, existential, genetic, hermeneutical, realistic, naturalistic constitutive,

and generative historic (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2003). Renowned classical phenomenologists include Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty; all of whom had diverse interests, interpretations of the central issues of phenomenology, applications of methods, and results (Moran; Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy).

Broadly defined, phenomenology is the study of conscious phenomena from the first person or subjective point of view (Sanders, 1982); the study of “being in the world” (Husserl, 1913/1958, p. 51); the study of “the ways we experience things, thus the meanings things have in our experience” (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2003). Sanders states, “The point of phenomenology is to get straight to the pure and unencumbered vision of what an experience *essentially is*” (p. 354). Phenomenologists study the structure of experiences of a variety of phenomena, active and passive, ranging from perception and thought to embodied action and social activity (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy). Phenomenological research findings are descriptive, rather than explanatory or prescriptive (Rose, Beeby, & Parker, 1995; Sadala & Adorno, 2001).

Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) founded the philosophical movement known as phenomenology at the end of the 19th century (Moran, 2000). He claims, “*Pure or transcendental phenomenology will be established not as a science of facts, but as a science of essential Being* (as “eidetic” Science); a science which aims exclusively at establishing “knowledge of essences” ...and *absolutely no “facts”*” (italics in original) (1913/1958, p. 44). Husserl defines essence in opposition to the individual, spatio-temporally existing, real object – the fact - that is the object of empirical sciences. In empirical perception, the individual spatio-temporal fact is revealed. In phenomenology, through eidetic perception, an essence is revealed (Mohanty, 1959). According to Stewart and Mickunas (1990), “The essence constitutes the structures which are

manifested by the empirical world” (p. 40). They provide the following example, “The essence of movement is not identical with any moving object, and yet movement is experienced immediately as an essential possibility of the object” (pp. 40-41).

Husserl’s central insight is that all human experience is based in consciousness. He states, “We [understand]...the unique peculiarity of experiences “to be the consciousness of something”” (1913/1958, p. 242). Consciousness is always consciousness of something, thus we say it has an object; Husserl labeled this “intentionality.” Intentionality is the central feature of consciousness. He explains, “Perceiving is the perceiving of something, maybe a thing; judging, the judging of a certain matter; valuation, the valuing of a value; wish, the wish for the consent wished, and so on” (p. 243). Unlike objects with which humans engage or observe, people live through or perform conscious experiences. Awareness-of-experience is critical to consciousness and results in the “lived” character of experience that affords the first-person perspective on the experience of the phenomenon studied. This perspective is characteristically at the heart of phenomenological methodology (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2003).

According to Husserl, consciousness attributes meanings to experiences. The meaning of an experience is distinct, but inseparable, from the experience itself (Edie, 1987). How a person conceptualizes an experience defines the meaning of that experience for that person; the meaning of an experience is the essence of what is experienced (Stewart & Mickunas, 1990). Meaning structures of experiences can be explored and described through phenomenological reflection, known as epoche or reduction, wherein we turn our attention inward, reflecting on the structure of our conscious experience, bracketing out or suspending as much as possible influences of the surrounding world, such as scientific, philosophical, cultural, and commonplace assumptions (Moran, 2000). Schutz (1932/1967) states, “Those experiences are

meaningful which are grasped reflectively. The meaning is the *way* in which the Ego regards its experience. The meaning lies in the attitude of the Ego toward that part of its stream of consciousness which has already flowed by” (italics in original) (p. 69).

Husserl’s phenomenological reduction enables isolation of the central, essential features of the phenomenon experienced (Moran, 2000), revealing its essence or “givenness” (Husserl, 1913/1958, p. 139). He explains,

We shall consider conscious experiences *in the concrete fullness and entirety* with which they figure in their concrete context – the *stream of experience* – and to which they are closely attached through their own proper essence. It then becomes evident that every experience in the stream which our reflexion [*sic*] can lay hold on has *its own essence open to intuition*, a “content” which can be considered in its *singularity in and for itself*. (italics in original) (p. 116)

Phenomenological reduction abstracts the factual features of experiences to arrive at what is essential to all experiences of that type. van Manen (1990) explains, “[It] is that what makes a thing what it is (and without which it would not be what it is)” (p. 177). He provides the following example, “There is the empirical essence of actual “teachers” with all their inevitable peculiarities and inadequacies, and there is the fundamental or ideal essence of the Teacher as the essence which every real teacher is oriented to” (p. 177). Accordingly, the goal of phenomenological analysis is to look beyond the particularities of participants’ lived experiences to discover the essential aspects of the phenomenon of interest. Thus, phenomenology is a science of “pure essences” (Moran, 2000, p. 132).

Based on the work of philosophers such as Hegel, Descartes, and Husserl, phenomenology evolved into a philosophical framework, or methodology, used in human science research, particularly to investigate the nature of lived or lived-world experience; that is, “human involvement in the world” (Boyd, 2001, p. 96). According to Schram (2006), the basic assumptions of phenomenological researchers are: human behavior occurs in the context of relations to things, people, events, and situations; perception presents evidence of the lived world; the reality (of anything) is connected to an

individual's consciousness of it, not something objective that can be discovered independent of the individual; meaning is developed and communicated through language; and the essential features, or essence, of a phenomenon as experienced by a group of individuals can be isolated and described.

In utilizing phenomenology as a research methodology and in deriving essential features or themes, or essences, of experiences, I should clarify that the intent is not to generalize the experiences from a small group of individuals to the population sharing similar experiences. Rather, researchers using phenomenology are interested in how individuals interpret the meaning of an experience in their own individual ways (Munhall, 2003). The researchers then take those individual narratives and analyze them to derive the essential features of the experiences of those group members. Munhall cautions, however, "Each participant stands alone. The ending narrative does not homogenize 10 interviews but tells many different stories of meaning. Of course, the researcher will become aware of similarities and differences and write about them as well, while still holding the individual as the focus for meaning" (p. 151). She continues, "Of all places, then, it is in phenomenology that we need to remember that "man is greater than the sum of his themes"we need to use our imaginations to report meanings that acknowledge the individual in experience, not a synthesis of meanings....we need to describe in narrative each individual's description and interpretation of the meaning of the experience" (p. 171-172). Thus, within the phenomenological tradition, researchers derive essential features from the individuals studied, and when reporting, strive to keep each individual's meaning visible. The essential themes of the experience then are particular to those group members. They cannot be said to apply to all individuals who share the experience, nor a different group of individuals studied.

Within the phenomenological tradition, primary approaches for human science research include empirical, heuristic, and hermeneutic (Moustakas, 1994). Using the empirical (or descriptive) approach, researchers aim to construct general structures of phenomena through comprehensive descriptions whereas heuristics involves syntheses of co-researchers' depictions, portraits, and knowledge of the experience to develop composite portrayals of phenomena (Moustakas). In hermeneutic phenomenology, researchers aim to understand lived meaning through comprehensive description and reflective-interpretation (Moustakas; van Manen, 1990). Boyd (2001) claims, "The common theme among the various phenomenologies is the concern for describing lived experience, which is understood as a concern for human meanings and ultimately for interpreting those meanings so that they inform our practice and our science" (p. 104).

Phenomenology was an appropriate methodology for my study for the following reasons. First, the purpose of my study was to understand the nature of participant observation and the relationships formed by scientists with participants for research purposes. The following two questions guided my study: 1). What meaning do participant observers give to their participant observation experiences? 2). What meaning do they give to their research relationships? As such, my focus was on exploring meaning and the nature of a lived experience, not on describing values, beliefs, behavior or processes, or nor on explaining something. Thus, phenomenology with its focus on illuminating the meaning of experience seemed a particularly apt methodology to employ. Second, participant observation is quintessentially a human activity that requires scientists to actively take part in the lives of social actors in their natural settings and to form relationships with them in order to develop understanding of social life processes. As this world of others is the object of study for participant observers, scientists are continually conscious of their own experiences in that world, both as humans and as scientists. This heightened awareness of the experience enables rich

first-person description, exactly of the sort best considered by, and essential to, phenomenology. Finally, phenomenology and participant observation share the values of an emphasis on in-depth interaction, contextualization, and interpersonal relationships in order to develop understanding of an individual's perception of events and experiences. Therefore, again, there appears to be a good fit between the content of the study and this particular chosen method.

van Manen (1990) asserts that, while there is not one phenomenological method, "There is a tradition, a body of knowledge and insights, a history of lives of thinkers and authors, which, taken as an example, constitute both a source and a methodological ground for present human science research practices" (p. 30). He proposes an empirical approach to phenomenological methods that involves the interplay of the following six research activities: 1). Turning to the nature of lived experience; 2). Investigating experience as we live it; 3). Reflecting on the essential themes; 4). The art of writing and rewriting; 5). Maintaining a strong and oriented relation; and, 6). Balancing the research context by considering parts and whole. In the following section, I elaborate on his understanding of these research activities, and indicate the role they played in my own study. I attribute the following format for describing how I carried out my study using this approach to Collopy (2000).

Phenomenological Methodology and Research Activities

The Nature of Lived Experience

The first activity in van Manen's (1990) approach is turning to a phenomenon about which we are concerned and to which we are committed. In my professional work as an administrator of an Institutional Review Board (IRB) at a university, I encounter regularly issues related to the design and conduct of research studies that involve participant observation. Participant observation is an extremely complex, highly personal, often difficult, undertaking yet little research exists about participant

observers' experiences and research relationships formed by researchers with participants.

There exists a relatively large body of literature on how to do participant observation, primarily in sociological and anthropological research methods texts. The existing literature on participant observers' experiences in the field (what they do versus the focus of their inquiry) is primarily anecdotal and focuses on procedural problems related to informed consent, access, establishing rapport, and note taking. Increasingly there are autobiographical "confessional" (Van Maanen, 1988) accounts describing the hardships of fieldwork or researchers' mishaps, supplemented by reactions of those studied upon learning about or reading published accounts of the studies in which they participated (Davis, 1993; Ellis, 1995). Given the complex nature of participant observation and its dependence on relationships with participants, gaining an understanding about the nature of the activity and the relationships formed for research purposes from the perspectives of participant observers is of primary import, particularly in terms of preparing future participant observers.

Investigating Lived Experience

The second activity in van Manen's (1990) approach to phenomenological research is investigating the experience as it is lived rather than as it is conceptualized. This section is the most detailed and lengthy in this chapter as it addresses my study's interviewing protocol, participant selection procedures, as well as a description of participants' characteristics.

In-depth interviewing is an appropriate method to access experiences that are not directly observable, or that have occurred in the past, such as those that were the topic of my inquiry. It also enables researchers to investigate phenomena using "“originary” (first-person)” (Davidson, 2003, p. 29) experience by having participants who have experienced the phenomena of interest report about their experiences. Further, in-depth

interviewing enables researchers to contextualize behavior and to access the others' understanding of actions. Seidman (2006) states, "A basic assumption in in-depth interviewing research is that the meaning people make of their experience affects the way they carry out that experience (Blumer, 1969, p. 2)" (p. 10). As such, it allows researchers to understand the meaning the people involved in the phenomenon of interest make of their experience. Accordingly, this method is appropriate for trying to better understand the meaning that researchers give to research relationships with participants in a participant observation experience.

The Interviewing Protocol. I used Seidman's (1998) three-interview structure. The first interview is a focused life history in which, "The interviewer's task is to put the participant's experience in context by asking him or her to tell as much as possible about him or herself in light of the topic up to the present time" (Seidman, p. 11). The second interview is designed to elicit the details of the participant's experience in the phenomenon under study. In the third interview, the interviewer asks participants to reflect on the meaning of their experience. Seidman explains, "The combination of exploring the past to clarify the events that led participants to where they are now, and describing the concrete details of their present experience, establishes the conditions for reflecting upon what they are now doing in their lives" (p. 12). According to Schutz (1932/1967), "The reflective glance singles out an elapsed lived experience and constitutes it as meaningful" (p. 71). As constructed, this three-interview structure is suited to explore lived experience as proposed by van Manen (1990); the experience is recalled in such a manner that the meaning structures of the experience are revealed.

In my study, I used the three-part interview structure as follows. In the first interview (life history), my line of questioning focused on getting participants to reconstruct their lives up until the time they first conducted participant observation, with particular attention to any experiences connected to their participant observation.

The second interview focused on the participant observation experience itself, particularly on the relationships formed with participants for research purposes and dilemmas experienced in the study. In the third and final interview, participants were asked to reflect on the meaning of their research experience, the meaning of the participation observation experience and the meaning of the research relationships. In addition, in this last interview I asked participants to elucidate the meaning of words or phrases that they had used in all three interviews and that I identified as being potentially significant for my study. According to Seidman (1998), the three-part structure is most effective when the interview schedule is such that interviews are spaced three to seven days apart. Although I followed this schedule with approximately half of my participants, busy schedules on both our parts, and in some cases distance, dictated that with the remainder of the participants, the first and second interviews were conducted either on the same day or on adjacent days. For the majority, the third interview was conducted within the three to seven day timeframe of the second interview.

Finding and Selecting Participants. After obtaining approval from the University of New Hampshire's Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research to conduct my study (see Appendix A), I started to locate and recruit participants for my study.

My goal was to obtain a purposeful sample (Patton, 2002) of sixteen participants. Maxwell (2005) describes purposeful sampling as "a strategy in which particular settings, persons, or activities are selected deliberately in order to provide information that can't be gotten as well from other choices" (p. 88). In qualitative research designs, Maxwell argues that selecting those individuals who can provide researchers with the information they need most to answer their research questions is the most important consideration.

While undoubtedly there are commonalities in researchers' experiences in participant observation, the nature of these studies as discussed above results in a decreased chance that there are studies that are representative or typical. Accordingly, participants were selected for this study in order to capture the heterogeneity (Maxwell, 2005) in the population of participant observers. Patton (2002) calls this "maximum variation (heterogeneity) sampling" (p. 234). The logic of this strategy is "any common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared dimensions of a setting or phenomenon" (Patton, p. 235). Maximum variation sampling requires selecting participants who meet predefined characteristics but who are as different as possible from the other participants in terms of these characteristics. This strategy allows for the development of detailed descriptions of each individual's unique situation while identifying significant key themes that are common to all. The themes derive their importance from having emerged out of the variation (Patton). As such, this sampling strategy is well-suited for a phenomenological study.

The criterion for my study was that participants either should be conducting a study currently or have recent experience, preferably within the last three years. This was to maximize accuracy of recall and to reduce problems with remembering events that took place in the distant past. I proposed to select participants based upon characteristics considered important to the study's goals. These are outlined in Table 1 below.

A further consideration was to involve researchers whose studies involved vulnerable populations because such populations might provide a richer source of data than those researchers who study fully autonomous individuals or elites. Populations could be considered vulnerable from a cognitive perspective or a legal perspective. The former might raise issues with regard to whether they fully understood who the

researchers were or why they were asking questions. The latter might not always ascertain the consequences of their actions or responses in the research context, such as the risks posed by a breach of confidentiality when admitting to illegal behavior. In addition, they might be particularly vulnerable to coercion due to their legal status, such as illegal immigrants or parolees.

Table 1: Participant Characteristics Considered Important to Study Goals				
	Male		Female	
	Novice	Experienced	Novice	Experienced
Social Science	1	3	1	3
Biomedical	Novice	Experienced	Novice	Experienced
	1	3	1	3

I started recruiting participants through word of mouth. Colleagues in my department provided me with names of individuals who had conducted participant observation, and I followed up with them by email. In addition to conducting a literature search, I reviewed biographies on websites of area institutions of higher education. I was referred to two of my pilot study participants via word of mouth; the third I discovered via a Web-based search. I followed the procedures detailed below with each participant in both my pilot and my main study.

Pilot Study. My pilot study consisted of three participants, one of whom I retained in my main study. Two of the participants were female; two conducted their participant observation work as part of their dissertation work and the third participant's

experience was as an undergraduate in a study abroad program. The participants conducted their research in the disciplines of education, social work and social policy, and anthropology.

As part of the consent process, I asked participants whether they wanted me to use their names or to protect their identities and use pseudonyms in reporting the results of my study. Of the 14 participants, 11 requested initially that I use pseudonyms. One participant who initially chose to use her own name changed her mind later when I followed up about the transcripts.

At the end of the first interview, I asked participants if they could provide me with any materials, such as published articles, reports, or dissertations that would give me background information about their study. When they were available, I read these materials before the second interview. The materials helped me to be more informed about the participants' research experiences, to help situate the issues of interest within the context of the specific experiences, and to inform my questioning during the interviews. Further, this information, when available, helped me better understand the context of the participants' experiences during the interviews, data analysis, and interpretation.

I recorded all interviews using a digital voice recorder. During the first and second interviews I took notes. The evening before the third interview, I listened to the recordings of the first two interviews and made notes about facts, comments, words, or other details that I thought significant. After completing the three interviews, I transcribed the recordings to create a text from which to conduct my analysis. I used Poland's (2002) suggested notation system to standardize my transcription from the start in terms of indicating laughter and interruptions and denoting undecipherable words.

After the initial transcription, I reviewed transcripts for accuracy while listening to the recording before printing them out and sending them to the participants. I asked each participant to review the transcript for accuracy and for clarification of any words or phrases that I could not interpret, indicated by a series of question marks in the text. I followed up with participants who did not respond to the transcripts.

Along with the interview recordings and transcripts, I kept a journal of my observations and thoughts on the process. After each interview and while still fresh in my mind, I recorded details such as the location of the interview, especially the first time at their home, my thoughts about how the interview went, including the type and amount of information the participant provided and any reflections on my performance as the interviewer, and my feelings about the relationship with the participant in terms of the level of ease or comfort. In addition, I reflected on experiences participants recounted or words or phrases that they used that paralleled others' as well as any of my insights that emerged from the accounts.

Further, I utilized this journal to address van Manen's (1990) caution that pre-understanding of and assumptions about a phenomenon may influence a researcher's interpretation of the characteristics of that phenomenon. This concern arises from studying something about which we are concerned and in which we have an abiding interest. In many phenomenological approaches, this process of a researcher acknowledging understandings, beliefs, assumptions, prejudices or viewpoints regarding the phenomenon under study is known as "bracketing" (van Manen) and "epoche" (Patton, 2002). Making explicit any prejudgments and suspending them allows researchers to study the phenomenon with an open mind and to see the experience as it is lived by the participants, rather than through an often unconsciously clouded lens.

In my journal and my memos, throughout the data collection, analysis, and interpretation phases of my study, I chronicled my pre-understandings, assumptions,

intuitions, and motives in order to make them explicit and record them. This was an ongoing process throughout the study as I uncovered and unraveled them through reflection, reading the literature, and talking with participants and others. During data analysis and interpretation, I referred to these notes continually in order to help keep my predispositions from unconsciously influencing my interpretation of participants' experiences and my inquiry into the nature of those lived experiences.

After I had completed my pilot study interviews, one of my dissertation committee members reviewed the transcripts and provided me with feedback on my interviewing techniques and the usefulness of the information provided by participants in relation to the purpose of my study.

As a result of his feedback, I added an initial question to the second interview to help frame the direction of that interview for participants; the question was, "What question brought you into your study?" In addition, I incorporated into the third interview questioning that focused on the meaning of key words that participants used, predominantly in the second interview, when talking about their studies. For example, if a participant said, "I felt that my participants really trusted me after a couple of months hanging out with them," I might ask, "In the context of your relationships with the participants in your study, what does trust mean to you?" Such questioning allowed me to clarify participants' use of key words and phrases, and ultimately to get a better understanding from participants in their own words about the meaning of words or phrases in the specific context as well as in the more general context of their study.

Finally, the committee member suggested that I do a minimal level of editing to the transcripts. These edits included removing hesitations and idiosyncratic parts of speech such as "kind of" or "like" where they were used as turns of phrase rather than where they contributed to the meaning such as in the statement, "It was like the other"; breaking up sentences where they were run ons using "but" and "so" and "and"; and

changing basic grammar when incorrect (e.g., “there was” to “there were”). The justification for this basic editing was twofold. First, the focus of my inquiry was not to analyze conversational structure or dynamics or speech patterns and thus minor edits as noted above, as long as they did not alter the meaning, were appropriate. Second, Poland (2002) states that verbal interactions are often “remarkably disjointed, inarticulate, and even incoherent when committed to the printed page” (p. 271). Thus transcripts that had undergone minor editing would be less disquieting to participants in the review process and, following Seidman’s (1998) philosophy, would present the participant in a light that is respectful and would allow them to retain their dignity if quoted.

At this point, the committee member advised me about the relevance of the three pilot study participants’ information for my main study. He considered the information obtained from one participant to be extremely valuable and suggested that I should include it in my study. He thought that the information from the second participant was of marginal value, that it could be used if needed. With regard to the third participant’s information, he recommended that I not include it. His recommendations were based on the type of experience that the participants had had and how it met the purpose of my study, and the nature of the participant observation experience, particularly the relationships formed with participants for research purposes. The participant whose information he recommended that I not retain for my main study had an abbreviated participant observation experience (about three weeks) in a setting where he was obviously an outsider. He was in a foreign country where he did not speak the language fluently and his appearance marked him as non-native. As a result, his relationships were short-lived, never really getting beyond courteousness between host and guest and curiosity frequently present among people of widely differing cultures.

Main Study. Throughout my pilot study, I continued to seek participants. For practical reasons, predominantly time constraints and financial resources, I needed to find participants within a reasonable driving distance of southern New Hampshire. This limited my geographic area for recruitment to the northeastern United States.

Five weeks into my recruitment efforts, I was experiencing problems identifying researchers from health/biomedical disciplines in this country (a good proportion appeared to be in Canada, Australia, and Europe) who had conducted participant observation, let alone recently. In my efforts, I identified some social scientists, such as sociologists, who had conducted ethnographic research involving participant observation in health-related topics such as HIV/AIDS and coronary heart disease. I proposed to my committee that I eliminate one of the two categories of research disciplines - biomedical/health – and instead include only social science researchers. In doing so, I stated that I would endeavor to include some participants who conducted health-related research as well as some who had studied institutions (as I stated in my proposal biomedical researchers were more likely to conduct studies that focus on institutions). My committee approved this modification request.

Although I invited a diverse array of people reflecting the characteristics considered important to my study as illustrated in Table 1, I encountered many problems finding respondents who met the criterion, were within driving distance, and were willing to commit the time to participate in my study. The majority of those who responded to my email and handwritten invitations chose not to participate for two reasons: they did not meet the criterion for currently conducting participant observation or having conducted participant observation within the last three years, or they were too busy to participate. At my request, however, many provided me with names of other individuals who might participate. Several respondents indicated an interest in my study and asked that I contact them at a later time as they were unavailable during the

summer. I continued to conduct literature and Web-based searches, to follow up with the people whose names had been supplied, and to respond to individuals who had suggested that I do so at a later, specified date.

By January 2006, eight months into my study, I had completed interviews with 11 additional participants. Although I had anticipated a sample size of 16 in my proposal, I found that as I interviewed additional participants, certain words, phrases, and concepts arose frequently from a diverse array of experiences. As Patton (2002) notes, "There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. Sample size depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what's at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility and what can be done with available time and resources" (p. 244). I chose heterogeneity sampling as my sampling strategy for this study as it aims at capturing themes that are central to a wide variety of cases. These common themes are valuable in capturing the core, shared dimensions of a phenomenon (Patton), which is the fundamental aim of phenomenology, according to van Manen (1990). Hence, as subsequent participants repeated specific words, phrases, and concepts and shared experiences that paralleled others', I identified patterns and themes arising across participants' accounts. This occurrence indicated that I had obtained an adequate sample to meet the aims of this study.

In Table 2 below, I detail the gender, age, discipline, focus of study and length of study for each of the twelve participants in my study. Following the table I discuss in more detail participants' characteristics.

Proportionally I invited approximately the same number of males as females to participate in my study. Except for the participant in my pilot study, however, only one male indicated an interest in participating although many provided me with names of other potential participants. In the end, this individual chose not to participate due to prior commitments. I was surprised by the lack of males in my final sample. In 2004,

males represented 40.8% of graduate school students (IPEDS, 2004). Although obtaining male perspectives and insights on their experiences would have been extremely valuable, my all-female sample provides an opportunity to look at the meaning of the participant observation experience and research relationships from this perspective.

Name	Gender	Age	Discipline	Focus of Study	Length of study
Silvia	F	44	Sociology & Social Work	Welfare families in urban housing projects	4 years
Theresa	F	42	Education, Leadership & Policy	Families participating in a social service organization	1.5 years
Patricia	F	27	Sociology & Public Policy	Families participating in a national program for transitioning from welfare	10 months
Debbie	F	59	Education & Disability Studies	Children's interactions in a first grade classroom	2 years
Catherine	F	31	Developmental Psychology	Siblings in an after school program	2 years
Courtney	F	37	Literacy & Language Education	Home-school connections in a fifth grade classroom	1 year
Kate	F	36	Recreation, Parks & Tourism Sciences	Strippers and strip club audience members	4 months
Jane	F	37	Curriculum & Instruction	Role of creativity in a Montessori school	4 months
Judi	F	60	Teacher Education	Collaborative inquiry in an independent network of educators	2 years
Susan	F	63	Sociology	Successful communities in two maritime regions	4 months
Betzaida	F	36	Sociology	Impact of an adult literacy program for homeless women	3 years
Bridget	F	35	Management	Work in a health & safety organization	4 months

The age range for my participants spanned nearly 40 years, allowing for diversity in research experiences. All the participants conducted their participant observation as doctoral students, nine for their dissertation research. Two participants conducted their studies as part of national studies wherein they were hired as members of research teams and were supervised by one or more experienced researchers. Five had previous, although not extensive, experience conducting participant observation prior to the experiences they focused on in this study.

One criterion for inclusion in this study was that the experience that would be the focus of the interviews be ongoing or recent, preferably within the last three years in order to maximize accuracy of recall and to reduce problems with remembering distant events. Several participants' experiences, however, were within six months to a year of the three year threshold and four participants' research experiences were more than five years ago. I based the decision to include them in my study on the fact that those participants had been analyzing and/or interpreting the data collected or had published results within the three year timeframe and thus the experiences remained familiar and could be recalled with ease.

I sought participants from a range of disciplines and with a range of populations and foci for their experiences in order to capture the heterogeneity (Maxwell, 2005) in the population of participant observers. The area of training for five researchers in this study was education; however their areas of concentration within education differed. While one participant's training was in sociology and social work, three others were trained in sociology; one had an area of concentration in public policy while the other two did not have areas of concentration. The remaining participants' areas of training were developmental psychology, management, and recreation, parks and tourism sciences.

Of the twelve research experiences involved in this study, nine were ethnographic in nature, one was phenomenological, and one used symbolic interaction. The remaining study did not have a specific methodology; rather, the researcher described it as a qualitative study. The following populations were involved in these research experiences: children, specifically first graders, fifth graders, siblings in an after-school program, and students at a Montessori school; adults deemed vulnerable due to their economic situation, specifically homeless women and families on welfare; and adults not deemed vulnerable, including members of fishing communities, workers in a department of a large institution, strip club audience members, and educators. The foci of the studies ranged from the individual level – children’s interactions with each other – to the group level - the impact of specific programs on a specific group of people – to the institutional level - - how people experience work in a department of an institution - to the community level – characteristics of successful communities. Studies ranged in duration from four months to five years.

Four of my participants identified themselves as Latino or Hispanic and the remainder as White. The percentage of minority participants in my study (25%) is marginally greater than the national average of all self-identified minorities in graduate school (20.4%) according to the U.S. Department of Education’s Integrated Post-Secondary Data Systems (IPEDS) 2004 data. The percentage of participants in my study who identified themselves as Latino or Hispanic (25%) is considerably greater than the national average. In 2004, Hispanics represented 6.1% (101,664) of graduate students in the United States (IPEDS, 2004). Of those, 54.6% (55,517) were women.

Seven participants were full time faculty at institutions of higher education, one was an adjunct professor, two were graduate students, one was staying home to raise her young child, and one was retired. Only a couple of those who were still in academia continued to use participant observation in their research. This appeared primarily to be

a function of time constraints. Participant observation is a very time consuming activity and other demands of academia, such as teaching, advising, and service, and other aspects of life, such as family and community commitments, present conflicting demands. Thus, although it might be a research method of choice for some, many choose to conduct research using other less time consuming methods for practical reasons.

After I finished transcribing all the interviews and had sent the transcripts back to the participants for review, I contacted those participants from whom I had not received any feedback on the transcripts. I asked them for feedback and if they had a preference for a pseudonym. The majority did not provide me with specific edits but asked that I 'clean up' their speech (Weiss, 1994) when using direct quotes. I noted that I was cognizant of how speech is very different from how we write and that in quoting them, my aim would be to present the concept and context as accurately as possible all the while making changes necessary to speech that otherwise did not do justice to them. Further, I asked those participants who had elected not to use pseudonyms to reaffirm their decision. One participant changed her mind.

Data Analysis Procedures. I conducted my data analysis in the following stages: thematic analysis consisting of marking and labeling transcripts employing van Manen's (1990) wholistic, selective, and detailed approaches, developing the structure for the analysis, and developing the themes; writing memos; and, developing the text. I describe these stages in more detail below.

Reflecting on Essential Themes

The third activity in van Manen's (1990) approach is reflecting on themes that characterize the phenomenon. He states, "Phenomenology is the systematic attempt to uncover and describe the structures, the internal meaning structures, of lived experience" (p. 10). By uncovering and describing the internal meaning structures of the

phenomenon as they are encountered in lived experience, a researcher aims to elucidate the essence (nature) of a phenomenon. van Manen claims that essence is “The true being of a thing” (p. 177). He explains, “[It] is that what makes a thing what it is (and without which it would not be what it is)” (p. 177). Thus the goal of phenomenological analysis is to look beyond the particularities of participants’ lived experiences in order to discover the universal or essential qualities or aspects of the phenomenon of interest (van Manen).

Researchers analyze each description of lived experience in order to elucidate the structural or thematic aspects of that experience and then to determine, across experiences, those that are incidental to a particular experience and those that are universal or essential to the phenomenon (van Manen, 1990). van Manen explains, “In the process of apprehending essential themes or essential relationships one asks the question: Is this phenomenon still the same if we imaginatively change or delete this theme from the phenomenon? Does the phenomenon without this theme lose its fundamental meaning?” (p. 107).

Themes are a means or a tool for getting at the meaning of an experience (van Manen, 1990). They express the essence of a phenomenon, describe an aspect of its structure. van Manen advises, however, that themes are always a reduction of a phenomenon; they cannot convey completely every dimension of an actual lived experience. He explains,

So a phenomenological theme is much less a singular statement (concept or category such as “decision,” “vow” or “commitment”) than a fuller description of the structure of a lived experience. As such, a so-called thematic phrase does not do justice to the fullness of the life of a phenomenon. A thematic phrase only serves to point at, to allude to, or to hint at, an aspect of the phenomenon. (p. 92)

In trying to ascertain the essence of a phenomenon, however, Munhall (2001) cautions, “Phenomenology is not interested in generalizability. It is interested in how

various individuals interpret the meaning of experience in their own individual ways” (p. 160). Thus the challenge for phenomenologists is to uncover the essence of a phenomenon while recognizing the unique experience of each participant. Researchers need to reveal the essential aspects of a phenomenon without homogenizing the interviews, preserving the integrity of the whole lived experience of each participant. This involves synthesizing heterogeneous responses and meanings in order to reveal the essence all the while not reducing them to a decontextualized list of differences and similarities (Munhall). She cautions researchers about being preoccupied with breaking down experiences into parts that can be aggregated or categorized together and reported as themes to the extent that the wholeness and the individual nature of each person’s experience is forgotten.

Transcribing the interviews myself allowed me to become more familiar with the words of my participants and provided me with additional opportunities for analysis. As I transcribed the interviews and then reviewed the transcripts to compare them with the recordings, I noted key words and phrases about which to write memos, recorded ideas about common themes that seem to be developing out of participants’ experiences, and wrote down questions that arose and which I wanted to pursue.

To facilitate researchers’ studies of the lived-experience descriptions and discernment of themes while keeping at the forefront the totality and contextual nature of participants’ experiences, van Manen (1990) proposes three approaches to thematic analysis. They are: 1). the wholistic or sententious approach; 2). the selective or highlighting approach; and 3). the detailed or line-by-line approach.

In the wholistic approach, I attended to each participant’s three interviews in order to identify a phrase that would capture the meaning of each experience as a whole. This allowed me to keep the wholeness and uniqueness of each participant’s experience alive.

I incorporated into van Manen's (1990) selective or highlighting approach Seidman's (1998) step of marking what is of interest in the text. By this stage, I had reviewed each transcript at least three times. As a result, I was becoming familiar with my participants' experiences, their backgrounds, and what they found meaningful. Based on this level of familiarity with the participants, their experiences, and the meaning they derived from those experience as a whole, I searched for and highlighted those passages containing concepts, examples, incidences, and situations that I determined, based upon the purpose of my study, were of significance or interest.

In the detailed approach, I read each sentence in the marked passage and assigned it, or a group of sentences, one or more categorical labels that described certain aspects that I considered to be noteworthy. The categories were inductive in that they arose from the material and were not preconceived (Seidman, 1998). Categorical labels included general descriptive labels, such as "graduate school experience," and specific words used by participants, such as "reciprocity" and "trust." I assigned labels based upon my familiarity, at the individual level, with participants' lives, their participant observation experiences, the meaning they derived from those experiences, and my increased level of understanding of the connections among these aspects. At a group level, my labeling involved recognizing threads that ran through each set of three interviews and then across participants.

Once I labeled all the transcripts, I filed the labeled material together for each category. After filing all the labeled excerpts, I sorted the categorical label files into three areas that would form the structure for my analysis: the participant observation experience itself, the relationships formed by researchers with the participants in their studies, and the researcher self. In addition, I started to make distinctions among categorical label files by sorting them by types or classes, such as interactions, dilemmas, emotions, or actions. I worked with the excerpts of participants' descriptions within

each label file, reviewing, sorting, and re-sorting the excerpts as I made connections among them, and then across labels and by types. As relationships among labels emerged and changed, I organized and reorganized them into themes. As I examined, re-examined, articulated, and re-articulated the themes that arose from my participants' experiences, I wrote memos.

The Art of Writing and Rewriting

The fourth activity in van Manen's (1990) phenomenological approach is that of describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting. For van Manen, "Responsive-reflective writing is the very activity of doing phenomenology" (p. 132). Maxwell (2005) asserts that writing memos is an essential technique for qualitative data analysis, not only to capture one's analytic thinking about the data but also for facilitating this thinking and "stimulating analytic insights" (p. 96).

As described by Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (1995), I wrote initial memos during the coding and preliminary analysis phases wherein I examined ideas, insights, and concerns, as well as specific phrases or words used by participants. Later, as I worked with the excerpts within and across labels, I wrote integrative memos (Emerson et al.) where I elaborated on ideas, explored relationships between labels, explored emerging themes, and examined excerpts that appeared to be anomalies. Through the iterative process of organizing excerpts, writing, reflection, reorganizing, writing, and reflection, I arrived at the essential themes of the participant observation experience and the relationships formed by researchers with participants from the perspectives of my participants and as told in their words. They are detailed in the following chapters.

Maintaining a Strong and Oriented Relation, and Balancing the Research Context

The last two activities in van Manen's (1990) approach pertain to development of the text. One requires producing texts that are oriented, strong, deep, and rich. van Manen claims, without a strong orientation to the fundamental question, "There will be

many temptations to get side-tracked or to wander aimlessly and indulge in wishy-washy speculations, to settle for preconceived opinions and conceptions, to become enchanted with narcissistic reflections or self-indulgent preoccupations, or to fall back onto taxonomic concepts or abstracting theories” (p. 33). He continues, “To be oriented to an object means that we are animated by the object in a full and human sense. To be strong in our orientation means that we will not settle for superficialities and falsities” (p. 33). Such an orientation toward the phenomenon in the research needs to be reflected in the text; researchers should ‘walk the talk’ in their writing. Richness and depth of text relate to the adequacy and character of description. He explains,

A rich and thick description is concrete, exploring a phenomenon in all its experiential ramifications....Depth is what gives the phenomenon or lived experience to which we orient ourselves its meaning and its resistance to our fuller understanding....Rich descriptions, that explore the meaning structures beyond what is immediately experienced, gain a dimension of depth. Research and theorizing that simplifies life, without reminding us of its fundamental ambiguity and mystery, thereby distorts and shallows-out life, failing to reveal depthful character and contours. (pp. 152-153)

The other activity that constitutes text development requires researchers to attend to developing the structure of the text in proportion to the significance of the various elements, and to monitoring how the parts contribute toward the wholeness of the text. As well as organizational form, the latter may include adequacy of content, effectiveness of presentation, and flow of ideas. This concludes my description of the phenomenological methodology I employed, and my research activities.

Limitations

Before I proceed with reporting my findings, I want to acknowledge several limitations of my study. I stated in earlier in this chapter, results from phenomenological studies are not meant to be generalizable: the essential themes are only directly applicable to the experiences of those studied and cannot be said to be

representative of all persons with similar experiences. That said, however, the value of conducting such studies is to discuss the results and implications in the event that others can apply them to their experiences. Before doing so, I need to recognize four perspectives that are not included in my study, but that I consider significant in the context of participant observation as a research activity.

Male Perspective

As I explained in this previously, proportionally I invited approximately the same number of male scientists as female scientists to participate in my study. The one male who showed initial interest in participating chose not to participate eventually due to prior commitments. Obtaining male scientists' perspectives and insights on participant observation and relationship experiences, and the meaning that they derive from them, would have been extremely valuable because of the influence that structural factors, such as gender, have on research relationships (Manderson, Bennett, & Andajani-Sutjahjo, 2006; Roberts, 1981). My participants, while representing a range of ages, socioeconomic statuses, and ethnicities, were all female. As research interactions are shaped by the social context of the research encounter (Manderson et al.), further research in this area might endeavor to see if and how male scientists' experiences differ from those of female scientists, particularly with regard to research relationships. If differences exist, research on the implications that the differences have on issues central in participant observation, such as informed consent, that I explore in Chapter 6 would be important.

Anthropological Perspective

Historically, participant observation has been associated with anthropology. As reported in Chapter 2, Malinowski, a British anthropologist, was the first scientist to describe the use of participant observation in research (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002; Wax, 1971). Participant observation is a central and defining method of research in cultural

anthropology, and is foundational to ethnographic research (DeWalt & DeWalt). Yet none of my participants trained as an anthropologist nor conducted her graduate studies within the discipline of anthropology. Theresa's study was anthropological in nature in that she studied culture and conducted ethnographic research, but it was within the discipline of education.

While anthropologists undoubtedly employ the mechanics of participant observation, such as gaining access and establishing rapport, in a manner similar to scientists in other disciplines, the focus of anthropological study, particularly cultural and social anthropology, might impact the nature of participant observation. Traditionally, cultural anthropologists have studied populations outside their own countries, particularly those who live in exotic or remote regions of the world. In the context of participant observation, such populations raise issues with regard to language barriers and effective communication, illiteracy, and different social and cultural norms, such as communitarian decision-making. More recently, some anthropologists have turned to researching populations within their own countries, often immigrants and refugees. As a result, they face additional issues, such as individuals who engage in illegal or deviant behavior. Accordingly, an anthropological perspective on participant observation and research relationships would have been beneficial to include. Future research to see participant observation undertaken within anthropology impacts the nature of participant observation and research relationships would be valuable, particularly with regard to implications that I explore in Chapter 6.

Health/Biomedical Sciences Perspective

In my original proposal, I anticipated including in my study scientists trained within the health/biomedical disciplines, such as occupational therapy and nursing, who had conducted participant observation. I failed, however, to identify any in this country who had conducted participant observation, let alone with the three year timeframe. As

a result, I endeavored to include as participants in my study social scientists who had conducted health-related research as well as some who had studied institutions as I stated in my proposal biomedical researchers were more likely to conduct studies that focus on institutions. While I managed to include as participants in my study at least two who had studied institutions, I did not manage to include any who had conducted health-related research. While there is no evidence to suggest that the experiences of participant observers trained in the health/biomedical disciplines might differ in nature from those trained in the social sciences, the nature of their relationships with participants might be impacted if their participants are their patients or are ill, due to the added complexities that these situations present.

Participants' Perspective

At the beginning of Chapter 5, I note that my study only involved scientists' accounts of participant observation experiences and research relationships. What is missing in this study, and throughout the literature, is the participants' perspective of their experiences being participants in research, particularly research involving participant observation. Ironically, although in most human subjects research participants are the foci of research, they are rarely asked about their experiences as participants in the research process.

Historically, I think participants' perspectives as research participants have been considered unimportant and peripheral to the research enterprise. More recently, the influence of theoretical perspectives such as feminism and critical inquiry has raised the consciousness of scientists toward the role of participants in the research process, including how they are treated as participants. For example, participatory action research recognizes participants as co-researchers or collaborators who actively shape the research process. The perspectives of participants qua participants, however, whether they participate in biomedical clinical trials, longitudinal interview studies, or

research involving participant observation, are rare in the literature. While studies have been conducted on specific topics in research participation, they tend to be in the health sciences, quantitative in nature, and focus on attitudes and motivations (Peel, Parry, Douglas, & Lawton, 2006) or issues related to consent in clinical trials (e.g., Sugarman et al., 1999; Flory & Emanuel, 2004), such as readability of consent forms.

Now that the consciousness of the scientific community has been raised regarding the ethical treatment of research participants, in order for scientists to continue to involve people in research of all types, especially that which is more physically and emotionally demanding of participants, and to justify their continued use, scientists have an obligation to learn more about the experiences of participants as participants, and to apply that knowledge in future research. This concludes my explanation of the limitations of my study.

In the following chapters, I report the findings of my study. I propose essential themes of my participants' participant observation experiences and their relationships with their participants, based on my analysis of their accounts, and, wherever possible, told in their words.

CHAPTER 4

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION AS A RESEARCH ACTIVITY

The goal of this dissertation study was to understand the nature of scientists' experiences conducting participation observation and relationships formed with participants for research purposes.

In participant observation, scientists take part in the lives of groups of people as a means of learning about their lives and to gain understanding of social life processes. They do so by being in settings for an extended period of time and actively participating in the activities of the people in those settings. They gather data through observation and gain understanding through intimate relationships with actors in settings (Sanders, 1980). Participant observers have a dual purpose in settings: to engage in the activities of the setting and to observe as much as possible what occurs (Spradley, 1980). Thus scientists have to become involved in settings, both with the people and the activities, yet retain enough distance to be able to observe and document.

In the previous chapter I justified phenomenology as my study methodology and described how I conducted the study. In this chapter, I delineate the essence of participant observation as experienced by my participants based on analysis of their accounts of their experiences with this research activity. I identify and characterize using the following terms five essential themes of participant observation arising from my participants' experiences: existential, experiential, multidimensional, situational, and processual. Within each theme, after providing a general description of it and outlining constitutive components, I describe the theme using my participants' experiences using

their words wherever possible. In doing so, I make every attempt to do justice to their experiences and the meanings that they derived from those experiences, and try to honor their words. In the following two chapters, themes are not presented in any particular order and pseudonyms are used as requested by my participants.

The Essence of Participant Observation

Existential

The first essential theme that I derived from analyzing my participants' accounts of their experiences is that they understand participant observation as an existential process. Here the term 'existential' refers to human existence; that is, participant observation is experienced as one of the human lifeworlds. According to Husserl, the lifeworld is the world of lived or immediate experience. Individuals may have one or more lifeworlds, such as the lifeworlds of someone who is a parent, a teacher, and a daughter (van Manen, 1990). All human activity is existential in the sense that being human entails existence. Existence is part of being human and thus all research activities may be considered existential in that they are activities performed by humans who exist. Participant observation, however, due to its requirement that scientists participate in the lives of social actors, is quintessentially existential in that participant observation as a research activity is a lived experience. My aim in describing the existential nature of participant observation is to differentiate it from the lived experience of other research activities.

Using Munhall (2001) and van Manen (1990), in exploring and describing the existential dimension of participant observation, I employ the following components that are considered in the phenomenological literature to be fundamental to the structure of any lifeworld; corporeality, temporality, spatiality, and relationality. As van Manen notes, however, although these components can be differentiated, they cannot be separated. He states, "They all form an intricate unity which we call the lifeworld – our

lived world....we can temporarily study the existentials in their differentiated aspects, while realizing that one existential always calls forth the other aspects” (p. 105).

According to Munhall (2001), “Corporeality refers to the body that we inhabit and is also referred to as embodiment....The body intelligence is what experiences phenomena. We negotiate through experience through the unity of mind and body as one. Perceptions are what enter the body and therefore become the starting point of meaning....Meaning and experience cannot exist in isolation” (pp. 169-170). Participant observers are embodied in settings, part of what Bradburd (1998) calls ‘being there’; they are physically present in settings, experiencing via their senses all that is happening and responding accordingly. It is through this embodied experience of phenomena that they attempt to gain understanding of participants’ worlds.

Embodiment in settings makes physical, emotional, and intellectual demands on participant observers. Scientists experience situations in studies, from entry to exit, as whole people, complete entities; while intellectually they are gathering information about all that goes on around them and trying to make sense of it, they are engaged emotionally and physically. Their holistic presence contributes to more fully understanding social phenomena. As explained previously, scientists engage in participant observation principally as an intellectual endeavor; they are seeking to understand certain phenomena. Thus, here I assume intellectual engagement (wanting to understand) as omnipresent and focus on the emotional dimensions of embodiment. I do so because while the physical demands of engaging in participant observation have been documented in the literature, the emotional component traditionally has been denied, or, if mentioned, until more recently, criticized for being unscientific.

Settings themselves may provoke emotional responses from scientists, such as feelings of comfort, excitement, or anxiety. Once in settings, a multitude of issues may evoke scientists’ emotional responses, irrespective of specific experiences or

relationships. In addition to emotional responses to settings in general, specific situations also evoke emotional responses in scientists, such as discomfort and anger. Thus, settings as a whole, and additionally, specific situations in settings, may provoke emotional responses from scientists, all of which provide data for them and contribute to their understanding of those settings and the actors within them.

In addition to the emotional demands placed on participant observers in response to settings, embodiment means that scientists physically experience settings. Here I distinguish between physical embodiment in settings and physically experiencing what participants do in settings; the latter will be explored later in this chapter. Through their 'body intelligence' (Munhall, 2001, p. 169), such as sensory perception and physicality of tasks, scientists bodily experience settings as their participants do. Such information helps to inform their understanding of participants' lived experiences. Embodiment accesses the feeling and presence of settings themselves. Physical presence allowed my participants to gain increased understanding of their environments by feeling what it was like to be in settings; noises, smells, sizes, shapes, temperatures, colors, and atmospheres are some of the environmental factors that informed their understanding.

Another context for embodiment results from relationships formed by scientists with participants in settings. All of my participants described emotional connections with participants formed as a result of their studies. For many, these connections accompanied their physical and social integration into settings. They described these connections in terms of the elementally human aspect of their research relationships: feeling compassion, empathy, sorrow, anger, joy, 'moved', 'touched,' affection, powerlessness, attachment, care, and love. I examine the emotional aspect of research relationships as experienced by my participants in the next chapter, in the section on the personal/professional duality of participant observation relationships. Another aspect of

embodiment in relationships is physical presence. Again, by this, I refer to the notion of being bodily present in relationships with participants.

The second component of lifeworlds is temporality. Temporality relates to the time in which we live. According to Munhall (2001), "Critical to temporality is history. We not only occupy a place in time per se, but we are located in a historical period. That period is extremely influential in regard to our behavior, attitudes, beliefs, and where we are located" (pp. 169-170). In participant observation, scientists are embodied in and participate in settings during a specific time in history. All that occurs, personally, locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally during that time period has effects that may impact participant observers, actors in settings, and settings themselves, and consequently studies being conducted in those settings. The September 11, 2001 tragedy exemplifies the all-encompassing and far ranging effects of some events. This event affected two of my participants in profound ways, and, as a result, their studies.

Spatiality is the third component of lifeworlds that I employ in this analysis. Spatiality is lived or felt space (van Manen, 1990). Munhall (2001) explains, "[It] refers to the space in which we are, our environment, which can assume different meanings for different experiences....An experience does not exist alone. It is always embedded and connected" (p. 169). By participating in the lives of others, participant observers find themselves in places that are part of the worlds of others and their lives. For my participants, those spaces included participants' homes, classrooms, organizations, neighborhoods, and communities. As in everyday lived experiences, the spaces in which participant observers are located while conducting their studies affect the way that they feel. The feelings that scientists derive from lived spaces help inform their studies through better understanding the lives, actions, and words of others.

The fourth and final component of lifeworlds used here is relationality. Relationality refers to lived relation with others in a shared space (van Manen, 1990); the

human connectedness that is achieved via relationships. Munhall (2001) describes relationality as “the world where we find ourselves in relations with others.... relationships within the experience being studied” (p. 170). For participant observers, relationality is the “doorway” to their participants’ lives and thus, a critical component of the research activity. I examine the relational aspect of participant observation in depth in the next chapter as I endeavor to delineate the essence of relationships formed by my participants for research purposes. In the remainder of this section, I illustrate the corporeal, temporal, and spatial aspects of the theme of participant observation as existential using my participant’s experiences.

Silvia conducted a study of welfare families in urban housing projects. One setting, in particular, provoked emotional feelings in Silvia. Having grown up primarily in and around public housing developments in the city where she conducted her study, Silvia’s familiarity with the setting initially caused her anxiety. She recalls,

I initially had a lot of concern about south Greenfield because I grew up around here and...I knew how horrible south Greenfield was. Initially, I was worried about it. I just didn’t know how it was going to be. It wasn’t anywhere that I had explored because I knew I shouldn’t go there. I was hesitant in a way but I also wanted to know. I ended up doing an incredible amount of work in south Greenfield. It was just initially I was not crazy about it. (2, p. 2)

Having previous experience working in public housing, Silvia describes the issues that public housing raises for researchers,

I also had some knowledge of public housing from all the inmates that I dealt with in prison so I had a lot, both of positive and very negative, because their stories of these public housing developments were pretty horrible so it was a combination. There is no just going into public housing developments. Number one, because we have a perception of them as being negative and two because they’re full of minorities (laughs) [Silvia is a member of a minority race]. They are not necessarily easy environments to go into for people because of those expectations.... Because I’m an expert in violence basically, I’m always the one that ends up doing this whole talk about personal safety and how to evaluate safety but I think those things are necessary to discuss with fieldworkers when you’re in a potentially different place, different context. So I think there is

some trepidation about being in those places but its part of ethnography that you become really comfortable in those places. (2, p. 6)

Silvia notes that once she had finished her study, “I knew what to do, where to go. I can go knock on people’s doors. It’s a very different kind of situation but obviously I spent time there” (2, pp. 6-7).

Once in this setting, the lived space of the public housing complex and the surrounding area continued to elicit Silvia’s emotions. She remembers,

I think I was scared in situations, especially late at night. I used to go to Main Street late at night because Pam never came home until very late so I used to walk about six or seven blocks at nine, ten at night. Those things were always potentially dangerous but I was never on the verge of being attacked or was never pursued. There were no attempts made against me in all that research. (3, pp. 13-14)

An incident later on during Silvia’s study, however, illustrated how the relationships that she had established in this setting helped to alter the felt space of this environment. An elderly man’s death sparked racial tension in the community. She attended a community safety meeting where she experienced a lot of extremely negative discourse directed at the race of which she is a member. While this incident could have created problems for Silvia in terms of her ability to work in the setting, the relationships that she had established already in that setting allowed her to feel safe in this situation. She recalls, “I had a relationship with Lisa [the director of services] and I had a relationship with some of the Board members at that point and all those things allowed me to feel very comfortable there despite the fact that they were really screaming these things against [my race]” (2, p. 22). For Silvia, the lived space (the environment) of her participants in one setting invoked a wide range of feelings, including fear, anxiety, and safety, depending on the situation and her relationships with participants in the setting.

Debbie’s feelings toward her setting contrasted with Silvia’s. Debbie conducted her study in a first grade classroom. She describes her feelings toward being in an elementary school classroom, “I’m really comfortable with children so it wasn’t a stretch

at all for me to be in those classes plus I'd done a lot of consultation in classes so I was real comfortable being in the school, being with teachers, being with children" (2, p. 2). Debbie had worked previously in the school where she conducted her study, and her familiarity with the actual space itself enhanced her feelings of comfort. Even though she had worked in the setting previously, however, Debbie decided to only observe and not participate for the first few weeks of her study. She explains, "I sat in the back of the room and I was pretty much transparent. Mr. Jones [the teacher] didn't even look at me. I just got the feel of how things were, walked along and he introduced me to people [letting them know] that I would be there for the rest of year" (2, p. 16). This strategy allowed her to access the feeling and presence of the setting in the context of her study, rather than rely on her feelings evoked by the setting in her previous role as a health professional.

Susan conducted her study in several maritime communities in northern North America. One of Susan's settings evoked feelings of powerlessness due to the wilderness and environmental factors of the landscape. She explains,

This string of communities is about a 50 mile stretch and six of the seven are in the first 25 miles...but the last one...is quite isolated and the road was windy and there were some pretty significant drop offs. When I was [there], I had the feeling like, "This is wilderness" because I would look up in the distance and I knew there was no habitation (laughs). So I was real careful about scheduling my interviews....I made two or three trips during that three weeks but still, I tried to get them all in the same day or some on the way back or something like that so I wouldn't be caught in a storm. (2, p.8)

Although she visited the region three times in total, her primary participant observation experience was conducted from November through January. In this region of the world, this time period presents a host of challenges, primarily weather-related. She described having to schedule stays in communities according to ferry schedules, and rescheduling appointments due to weather and difficulties with transportation. She remembers looking out of the kitchen window at one participant's house and seeing that

it was completely white outside, “The weather forecast was for these high winds, 90 kilometers an hour or whatever, and I had gotten to her place without any trouble and I looked out the window while we were talking and I was like, “Oh my God, how am I going to get home?”” (3, p. 10). Further, the holiday season meant that potential subjects were busy traveling, with holiday preparations and events, and family obligations. Routines were often disrupted which meant that it was sometimes difficult to contact people. This time period, however, presented opportunities for gathering other types of information; people were not busy with the fisheries and a key political issue erupted allowing Susan to witness community mobilization, a topic of interest in her study. Her experience of being in the settings helped Susan to better understand her participants’ lives by providing context, learning how settings functioned, and learning how actors functioned within settings.

Circumstances surrounding Kate’s setting in her study of strippers and strip club audiences initially invoked feelings of anger in her. According to state law, females cannot enter strip clubs unaccompanied by males: Kate had planned to make a strip club the setting for her study. She overcame this initial hurdle by asking a friend to take her with him the next time he visited the strip club. Unlike some of her female friends and a professor who was overseeing her study, Kate was not anxious about going to the strip club, in terms of it being dangerous, because she had acquaintances who had been there. Once in the setting, however, the feelings that the actual space itself evoked were not so positive. She recalls,

I remember feeling really disgusted like the tables were dirty, the bathrooms were dirty. “Everything is dirty.” I think the first time I was went there it was just so overwhelming that the dirt was part of the charm but then afterwards I’d go there and I’d feel it and I’d be like, “Okay, it doesn’t matter. I’m not wearing anything nice. It’s not what you’re here for. Don’t worry about it. Don’t think about the fact that they need to clean.” (3, p. 24)

Recalling this type of information that she gathered from her physical presence in the setting prompted Kate to describe the importance of being present physically in her setting,

You had to go round and feel the place. You can't get a feel for the setting unless you are in it. I think that's really important, to be able to feel what the setting feels like in ways that I might not have even been able to explain in my fieldnotes to myself but because I was there I know....that nonverbal level of being there....I don't mean hot or cold. I mean whether I feel comfortable or threatened or that I fit in or don't fit in. The nonverbal ways that people react to each other and you can feel it when someone's reacting to you or when other people are reacting to each other. I mean that's partially how I felt that I wasn't unsafe there. I say I didn't feel unsafe, that I knew I had a sense of who to talk, who not to talk to. I guess the manner you can understand a place. Seeing it but also a sixth sense of sorts that you need to have when you're in a situation, that I was probably paying closer attention since I was in a situation that people consider to be dangerous so I was trying to pay attention that way as well. (3, pp. 4-5)

For Kate, physical presence in settings is critical in order to understand actors' experiences in their settings, and to aid in understanding their lives.

Judi conducted a study of collaborative inquiry in an independent network of educators. Unlike most of my participants, Judi had been a participant in her research setting for more than twenty years. When she decided to conduct her study there, in order to try to understand her participants' experiences she took on a new role in the setting and in her existing relationships. This evoked a variety of feelings in Judi. She explained that her participants were "People whom I loved, friends, women friends, and then a couple of men just over time" (2, pp. 1-2). Thus assuming a different role wherein she stepped outside the group and documented what was occurring, all the while having these caring relationships, was, she recalled, a "large gulp." She also recalls feelings of privilege which stemmed from having a new way of participating in the organization,

I liked having that...way of participating that felt really privileged to be able to see all of that unfolding and knowing, having experienced it personally from all of those roles, to be in yet another role to just watch it unfold. Then to be able to take that tape back to my room to listen very carefully to what was going on there and then to be able to follow that up.

Excitement of seeing things that because it was all oral...if you're participating, it's the process of participation for people...and they'd get the notes afterwards. Some people read them, some people don't. When you're transcribing conversations of people, sometimes connections are made on a delayed basis. Someone might put something out here and because it was a round robin and not a lot of crosstalk, this person might address this issue much later, maybe even ten minutes later, and come back to this so that this initial idea that's floated or interpretation gets built on by other participants and to be able to see that in my own notes. Then it was very exciting for me as a participant researcher, to be able nab somebody informally...or officially to set up an interview where I could ask probing questions...more about their take on how it was meaningful for them or what was their experience of this. (3, p. 4)

Being a researcher, as opposed to a participant or a facilitator, allowed Judi a new way of looking at the experience.

On September 11, 2001, Judi was in the process of winding down her study. She states that the event that day was "Like sucking the air out of any forward momentum for a while" (2, pp. 9-10). She contemplates, "I'm wondering if [my study] would be different if it hadn't been for 9/11. It was hard for me to kind of mobilize" (2, pp. 9-10). The corporeality of participant observation, the engagement of the scientist in totality, meant that the emotional effects of this event on Judi impacted her study. This was also the case for Theresa, who was about to embark on her study when the tragedy struck. She recalls,

The thing that threw me was that I had no emotion, no feeling. I was a mess. I cried for like three days straight and I had no feeling whatsoever... but the thing that I got so angry about was that this can't be happening to me. Now this is totally unfair because by golly I have worked so hard to do this research study and I am a participant observer and I'm going to do this study with myself as a research instrument and being able to gauge my feelings and think clearly and doing all of this stuff that I need to do with my brain and my heart and everything together is really important and don't take it away from me, God damn it (raises voice) and that's what September 11 did to me. It totally shattered me. It was like okay, take me, slam me against the wall. I might just as well have been totally incapacitated. (2, pp. 28-29)

Theresa recalls how she managed to recover from this traumatic event,

The one thing that saved me was that I knew that the only way to get through it was to write everything down, record my feelings, document.

So nobody had prepared me for the fact that I could possibly be slammed up against the wall, totally shattered and really broken but what I had learned and prepared for was the fact that I had to write everything down. I still had to keep track of my emotions because it was all the filter. It was how I was going to see everything. (2, p. 29)

Once she had embarked on her study of families participating in a social service organization, a primary space for Theresa was the home of two of her key participants. She recalled feeling comfortable and “at home” in this house with these primary participants and their two children. When there, she usually sat on the couch and the children would climb all over her. She commented that she often got down on the floor to play with the children because, “It became such a natural thing to do” (2, p. 16). When she revisited this space, however, with the landlord after her participants had been evicted, near the end of her study, Theresa’s feelings changed dramatically. When she reflected on the condition of this space, she recalls, “I was like, “Oh man, I was comfortable here? This is a real pigsty.” That was kind of an awakening for me. I was like, “Oh yeah, this was home”” (2, p. 25). Although she was comfortable in this space while participating in her participants’ lives, out of the context of the study, the lived space evoked quite different feelings in her. She recalls how experiencing the setting to which her participants moved helped to further her understanding of their changed circumstances, and thus deepened her insight into their lives,

I caught up with Karen and they were in the campground. Maybe it was March, maybe it was February. It was still freezing because their water was freezing. They didn’t have running water. The hose that they had to the camping trailer was very substandard and it was really hard for me to know that they were living like this. I mean, I was happy in one sense to see Karen and to reconnect with her and know that she was okay....On the other hand it just totally sucked, pardon me. But at that point it was good in her perspective....she actually seemed a whole lot happier in those circumstances and those living conditions than when they were back in town in the house. But it was just because everything was so much easier, even though the living conditions were substandard and that was just really hard to swallow. (2, p. 25)

Her participants’ new living space evoked a variety of emotions in Theresa. She recalls,

To then drive home and think what a fucked up society we live in. Where people end up like this and what are our priorities and what are we doing and you know, what does it say about us? Then individually I really feel powerless to change it and I hate saying that, and I use that word hate very sparingly. But I hate feeling powerless and I have a whole lot more power than Karen and Brian do and I feel powerless. Yeah I can vote, but do I feel confident that my vote is going to change anything? No, I don't and I really don't like that. (2, pp. 25-26)

Theresa's experiences excerpted here illustrate the corporeal, temporal, and spatial aspects of participant observation. She explains the value of the knowledge gained from such experiences, "I still don't really know to the extent that Karen and Brian know but the fact that I have my own experience and understand theirs from their perspective.... That I know things in a way that I didn't know before and I'm glad that I know it, even if I'm powerless to change things in society as a whole, the fact that I had the experience and...that I know for myself" (2, p. 26).

Unlike the effect of September 11, 2001 on Judi and Theresa, excerpted above, that illustrates temporality in the contexts of scientists qua humans, temporality also exists in terms of settings. Jane conducted her study of the role of creativity in a Montessori school that her children attended. The current director had founded the school, which had been in operation for over 10 years as a nonprofit institution. In the year prior to Jane's study, the region experienced tremendous job cuts and as a result, enrollment at the school decreased significantly. As a nonprofit organization, the school could not sustain itself with such dramatic reductions in enrollments, and just before Jane started her research, the school was sold to an out-of-state corporation. The director was particularly eager for Jane to conduct her study at that particular time because, Jane notes, "She felt very strongly that this research work needed to be done in her school before the school basically changed its face" (2, p. 26). She recalls, "She was basically, "Whatever you want, you do whatever you need to do." In a sense there's a memory of that school in that study which was incredibly important to her because she

had given 10 years of her life to this school” (2, p. 27). Thus, timing was critical for Jane as she needed to finish her research before the school officially changed owners, altering her setting.

Similarly, Betzaida recounted the effects that state and local events had on her study. She started her research approximately one year after comprehensive welfare reform was proposed in the state where the organization in which she conducted her study was located. Her study started out as an evaluation of the methods teachers in a literacy program used to teach basic literacy skills to homeless women. She became intrigued, however, by how welfare reform was being implemented in the state and its effects on the women the organization served, particularly in light of the critical and feminist pedagogical theoretical lenses she was employing in her work. She explains,

Women were then dropping out of my study and out of a lot of other programs when welfare came to the front because first they didn't know about their rights, they didn't know that many of them were still entitled to be in these programs. They were in a state of panic that they were going to lose their benefits within a year and for many of them, it was not realistic that they can get their high school diploma in a year because their literacy levels were so low....I was looking at, again, that injustice piece and that was the kind of activist mode I was in. I was going to first show how empowering this form of education can be for battered women and women who've had these very violent experiences in their lives, how they learn to write and they learn to read and then talking about what impact that has on their lives and their motivations to go to school for their children. All these values that are really great American values but that the way the media and the public discourse was presenting the case to reform welfare was that these women are lazy, unmotivated, criminals, all that pathology. So it was just fascinating to me. (2, pp. 3-4)

As a result, she altered her study to incorporate looking at the impact of welfare reform on this population, particularly aspects relating to educational requirements. Thus, for Betzaida, the temporal dimension of participant observation impacted her study by altering the focus due to the effects of certain events (national and state welfare reform) in her setting.

These excerpts demonstrate the essential theme of participant observation as existential: they illustrate the corporeal, temporal, and spatial aspects of participant observation that arise from scientists' presence in settings and their relationships with participants. (I describe the relational dimension in depth in the next chapter.) The existentialist theme illustrates the physical and emotional demands that participant observation places on scientists as they participate in the lives of others, and actively engage in settings; scientists are engaged in settings as whole entities, not just intellectually. My participants' experiences excerpted above demonstrate that the idealized positivist scientist – intellectually engaged but socially, physically, and emotionally detached – appears absurd at best, impossible in reality.

Further, the existential theme shows how participant observation as a research activity is integrated with, and is influenced by, what occurs in the larger context and how external factors impact studies. It illustrates how participant observers cannot be isolated from all that occurs in the world at large. This characteristic differentiates it from other research activities where the majority of scientists attempt to control for the effect of external factors. These two characteristics of participant observation – impacted by the external environment, and physical, emotional, and social engagement – arising from the existential theme, contribute significantly to the uniqueness of participant observation as a research activity.

Experiential

As stated previously, scientists conduct participant observation in order to learn about, and to gain understanding of, social life processes of groups of people. Through taking part in the lives of others and directly engaging in their ordinary and extraordinary activities, participant observers can gain empathetic understanding of the meaning given to social action in settings. As each participant observation experience is unique, individuals' experiences vary dramatically. The experiential, however, is an

essential theme of participant observation and derives directly from the need for active participation and engagement in the lives of others. By experiential I mean based on or centered in experience.

In order to understand those whom they study, participant observers develop relationships with participants and, to the extent possible, engage in the activities that constitute all or certain aspects of their participants' lives. In order to share their lived experience, participant observers need to insert themselves into their participants' daily routines and experience as much as possible. This aspect is at the heart of participant observation as experiential. Sometimes scientists, however, for a variety of reasons, cannot participate in the lives of their participants to the extent of sharing their participants' lived experience. They can, however, get close enough to their participants' experiences to gain an understanding of their participants' perspectives.

In recounting their participant observation experiences, all my participants described the value of firsthand experience in deepening their understanding of their participants' lives and perspectives. This value was primarily through seeing a more holistic picture of people, accessing complexity, and accessing dynamics or interactions of actors in settings. Being in settings and experiencing, or getting close to the experiences of, participants' lives, allows scientists to obtain more holistic pictures of their participants than other research activities. This is because they are accessing the person as a whole, complex being rather than discrete slices of participants' lives at specific times as they would in other research activities, such as experimental procedures in laboratory settings. Following, I demonstrate the theme of participant observation as experiential as experienced by my participants.

In her study of a literacy program for homeless women, being present and sharing her participants' lives in a variety of settings over time allowed Betzaida to gain a more holistic sense of her participants' lives. She explains this aspect of her work,

I didn't think just interviewing the teachers and collecting the curriculum was going to [be adequate] because if you're talking about say, measuring something like whether somebody is empowered...it was more than just the women being empowered by say, gaining their high school diploma, gaining a job. They had all these other measures like that the women would get a library card, that the women would register to vote, that the women would have a sense of community. So I was like, "Gee, you can't really study a sense of community just by only interviewing the teachers or only interviewing the content of the classes." I wanted to get a sense from the women themselves, how did they see themselves as changing, not just me observing them....So I could only get that kind of analysis or that understanding by the women's interpretations of that so that's when I started to develop more... participant observation. (2, pp. 8-9)

Embarking on participant observation raised more questions for Betzaida in terms of her participants' experiences as she recalls,

Going back and forth constantly with the women who were absent a lot or the women that just would get so frustrated or would not want to write even a sentence or would get so frustrated and hit their head like [demonstrates] this because they didn't know their multiplication tables because they just simply could not memorize. I started thinking again, "What were those social influences? What's going on in her life that she just can't learn these multiplication tables?" So I would only get that...understanding if I got to know her. And then I would realize, "Gee, three years ago her boyfriend beat her up and she had brain damage and that's why she can't get her multiplication tables." That kind of thing I would not have known just by being a participant observer only in the classroom setting or that this woman was absent say for a week and it was because the welfare office cut off her child care subsidy and she's been at home for a week now or going to the welfare office everyday and not being able to make any progress on her case. (2, p. 9)

As evidenced by Betzaida's experience, firsthand experience of participants' lives provides scientists access to the many dimensions of those lives, enabling deeper understanding of participants' perspectives. To this end, Betzaida often went to the homes of formerly homeless women to conduct follow-up interviews and to keep in contact. She describes an incident that occurred on one such visit,

I was in the kitchen with the woman and I had brought some donuts and we were doing an interview and the kids were in the other room. The little boy, about six years old, he was preschool age and there was a little girl. They kept running into the kitchen, more because they were excited, there was somebody in the house and there were donuts. But she kept like slapping them and telling them to go out of the room and...I thought she was a little rough. But then...she literally flung her son, I mean

banged him against the wall. It was so brutal and violent, I couldn't believe it. So I took a break from the interview. I was like, "I just need to use the bathroom" and then I was like crying in the bathroom. I was there for a while. I didn't know what to do. (2, p. 16)

The woman was reported for suspected child abuse and soon thereafter confronted Betzaida at the organization where she was conducting her study. The woman was subsequently dismissed from the program (she had caused problems previously) but Betzaida had to get a restraining order against her. This account reveals the often unexpected and sometimes traumatic aspects of getting close to participants' experiences.

Betzaida conducted her study for approximately three years. This extended time frame enabled her to see how people's lives changed. She recalls one woman in particular,

She didn't want to do anything having to do with any other student. She didn't even want to be in classes. She just wanted to be tutored individually.... "I hate women"I was able to see with her how over time, she really changed her way of being in the classroom. Like coming in and saying good morning to everyone or coming in and sitting next to someone as opposed to sitting in the corner in the back. So those kinds of things, I was aware of over time, that these changes had happened in this person. I don't know for sure what the exact explanation is but there's all of these things over here and as much of that that you can capture, I think that's the goal of participant observation, to give that kind of holistic sense of what might be happening there. (3, p. 17)

Within the literacy program, Betzaida noted that changes often reflected what was going on in participants' lives outside the program. Participant observation gave her access to participants' lives holistically – not just what they were learning in the classroom – and gave her a holistic sense of the participants – not just the pieces connected to literacy - as well as enabling her see the dynamic process of change over time.

Compared with Betzaida, Susan was in her setting only a short period of time. She stated, however, that she felt like she was "studying real life" by living in the communities she was studying, and engaging in activities in which people in the

communities participated, such as shopping, attending church, going to the hospital, and dining out. For Susan, actually living in the communities - going to people's homes to conduct interviews, experiencing the weather, seeing the immaculate homes, witnessing people bringing in donations when a couple's house caught fire - allowed her to access and get close to certain aspects of her participants' life experiences; to not just hear about them in an interview but to actually access parts of their daily lives. For example, in one setting, she ascertained through conversations and interviews that there was a general disdain for government. As a result, many of the communities were not organized and there were few regulations, such as those prohibiting dumping. When traveling around, Susan experienced firsthand the effects of this lack of regulation via seeing many abandoned vehicles and boats rusting on the side of the road.

As a result of attending community and annual meetings of specific groups of professionals, Susan witnessed the dynamics and behaviors that she learned about through numerous interviews. Her presence informed her about how these professionals worked in the setting and how they interacted with others, contributing to her understanding of the phenomenon she was studying. At one meeting, Susan observed the dynamics of the professionals in their work in the community through how the meeting was run, and how they interacted with colleagues and community members. She observed how two women, who had taken over semi-leadership positions without much professional training, appeared very unsure of themselves and out of place at the event. Her firsthand experience in situations such as these enabled her to understand her participants' perspectives, and deepened her understanding of the issues that participants described during interviews.

Bridget conducted her study of work in a health and safety organization. She was in the setting from mid-May through September. During that time, she shadowed

workers both within and outside the office environment as they went about their daily routines. She describes this experience,

There were times, for instance, following the...[workers] around, I did all their work. I collected garbage, I scanned, I did swabs. It was a really wonderful experience because you realize how it must feel to do this kind of work. Maybe I got it wrong but it was a good experience to get the feeling of how physical it was first of all, how exhausted I was. I don't think I'm in bad shape but just to walk their beat killed me. This guy was near 60 and he was just jumping around and I was, "Wow." (2, p. 13)

The experiential aspect of her work contributed greatly to Bridget's understanding of her participants and their work. In describing the importance of this aspect of her work as a participant observer, Bridget states, "In sharing this lived experience you share some of the tragedy and some of the comedy and some of the really, really human stuff that happens everyday" (3, p. 4). She recounted how the complexities of people's lives played themselves out in their behaviors, and how experiencing aspects of their lives over time helped her to understand their perspectives. She described one participant's "obsession" with managing projects and how he constantly wanted to discuss project management with her. After a time working with him, Bridget started to challenge him on the topic and then joke about it. Eventually he relaxed. She explains that it was a matter of figuring out why it was happening and then realizing,

"Okay, this is actually a way that he deals with his fears and how he manages the world and things like that." So then I could advance on it. It helped me understand where these things were coming from. Sometimes you ask someone a question and they answer something different and you have to think, "Why? How do I get them back? Maybe I'm missing something? Maybe there's something important here and I should listen to it and maybe I should try to explore something in there." (2, p. 18)

Participant observers witness participants *in situ* over time and the effects of myriad of factors that impact their lives. The process of participant observation - being in the setting regularly over time experiencing participants' lives - is key to gaining a more holistic sense of participants and their lives. This holistic picture informs scientists more fully about the pieces of participants' lives that are being studied. For example, although

Bridget was studying work in a specific setting, she experienced some of the social parts of workers' lives, such as joining them for drinks after work and playing on their softball team, as well as hearing about their personal lives, all of which impacted their work; nothing in life happens in a vacuum. She recalls her experience with one participant,

He was...fairly senior but he was an outsider.... Eventually I think probably half way through my time in the field I went to see him with some questions and I wanted to interview him. Basically he just let everything out and as a senior administrator he had access to a whole bunch of information that most of the employees didn't know. He told me what he knew about the management decisions and what was coming and who was going to get fired and who was going to be hired so he told me a lot of that kind of stuff. But let me tell you, I had to listen to a lot of other stuff to get to that stuff because it became like a counseling relationship. I had to listen to all of his bitching and complaining about how the office was not run properly. He had a very, very good sense of what could be done, what he could do, what other people could do, how the world could be and he was upset about things. So I listened to all of that....That was one of the first experiences I had with him....The second time I heard all about the problems...he's had with his employees and of course I know these problems because I see them. I get where he's coming from. He's not wrong (laughs). These things are somehow existing in the world. Then the third time I think I heard about his wife's death and the new woman he's seeing. (2, pp. 7-8)

In this example, learning about the issues that this participant was facing in his personal life helped Bridget to understand some of his behavior at work. She recalls developing a lot of empathy for him, thinking, "This guy has a very complex life. He's a complex person. He's a nice man. These are not my problems and I can't do anything about them and I'm just going to listen and extend something of myself" (2, p. 9).

Debbie studied the interactions of first graders in a classroom setting. As an adult graduate student, Debbie was obviously not a first grader, nor did she look like a first grader. She spent two years, however, doing the work of first graders and getting close to their experiences in a classroom. She wanted to know what the children felt about the activities they did in the classroom and did so through watching them in the classroom and talking with them. She also, where possible, participated in activities with them. She explains, "I sat among the children and I had my own desk....I would get the

worksheets and I wrote fieldnotes on my worksheets. It was great and...I would say, at least 75% of the time, I was able to talk to the children about what they were doing as they were doing it and that was wonderful" (2, p. 4). Throughout the school day, she participated as a first grader, sitting with the first graders at morning program, lining up with them, attending all their classes, doing their classwork, eating lunch with them, and playing with them at recess. Because first graders' language was limited, observing and participating allowed Debbie to see all of the things that went on but that maybe they could not articulate well.

During her time in the classroom, children were very eager to share their experiences with her, both things that went on at home or in school when she was absent. She recalls one incident,

We were standing in line to go back to our class....this kid's tugging on my shirt and I leaned over and he said, "I had sex over the weekend." I was like, "Oh my golly, I want to hear all about this" but we're in line and we can't like get involved in a huge conversation so I said, "Oh you did? So tell me about it." He told me this other girl's name in our class and that he'd had sex with her and he wasn't going to tell his mother. By this time the line's moving so it's like, "Okay, now what am I going to do with this?" I figured that what I'm going to do is find out what sex is (laughs) before I go anywhere with anything. So as we were moving he said "My cousin's older" and something about his cousin helping him...."How old's your cousin?" "Oh he's big" so I'm now I'm really thinking, "Okay, I really have to hear this whole story." Anyway, the sex was kissing with your tongue in somebody else's mouth...later when we got back in the classroom during seatwork time...I was able to talk more to him about that but those are the kinds of things that I had access to. (2, pp. 6-7)

The children's eagerness to share their experiences gave Debbie access to many aspects of their lives although, as an adult, she could not experience much of their lives directly as first graders.

Theresa's study of families participating in a social service organization contained two key components; studying the professional service providers and studying the families participating in the program. She explains how she conducted the component of her study that involved the families,

I quit my job so I left that professional hat behind and that was when I made my way into families....I went to the Center every week two days and participated in the program as a parent. I rode the bus and everything.... There was a typical Center day. That would have been showing up at Karen's house. The bus must have come shortly before eight or a little after eight....Hang out at her house while she was getting the kids ready for the programs....Get on the bus with her, go to Center, participate in all the Center day activities as if I was a parent, hang out in the classroom while the kids were playing and watching the parents with their kids and the teachers with the parents and just taking in the whole dynamic and just sort of being there, hanging out....just participating in all those Center day activities as a parent, going out on the smoking break and listening to people's conversations and being a part of that and riding the bus. (2, pp. 4-8)

The experience was all the more meaningful for Theresa because she was a parent, although her children did not attend the program that she studied. She grew to know the family at whose house she "hung out." She spent a lot of time there, experiencing their family life. She came to know her key participant, Karen, the mother in the family, well as they spent a lot of time together. Theresa ascribes her decision not to recommend early intervention services for Karen's daughter to her knowledge of how such a recommendation might impact the family's already extremely complex life,

Even though I was sure that she would have been eligible, and...there were probably things that early intervention might have been able to help her family with, I also understood the complexity of the family well enough to understand that the last thing Karen needed was one more person trying to help her....I don't think early intervention would have been effective in that situation so it was very easy for me to say even though I'm sure she's eligible and if I only wore my early intervention hat I would say that she should have it. I was wearing a far more multifaceted hat. (2, pp. 23-24)

This decision was based on Theresa's knowledge of the complexity of Karen's life that she had gained through sharing many aspects of it.

Likewise, through sharing children's experiences in the after school program where she studied sibling relationships over two years, Catherine recalls feeling as though she witnessed the complexity that was part of the children's day-to-day lives,

What I felt like was that...kids....just have their day-to-day life and so all they have is [the] changing nature of relationships and all the complexity.

I was looking at a family unit that might have a single mom and the kids might have different fathers and the mom has a new boyfriend and that was the family unit. That wasn't a negative to me....that was the kid's life. That's all that they experience so that complexity is just what their life is like. It wasn't like I wanted to isolate anything out of that complexity. I wanted to present the complexity and all of it. If they talked about their mom's boyfriend, fine, put him in there. It wasn't messing up my study of a sibling relationship. It was actually part of it, all these different characters that came into their discussions of being a sibling....It was about their peer relationships and it was about whether they had a bad day or a good day at school. It all came into their sibling relationship. I was trying to not to get away from complexity. I was trying to dive right in and present it for what it was from just how the kids presented it. (3, p. 5)

She contrasted embracing the notion of a sibling relationship as one element in a complex web that constituted a child's life, that she experienced through sharing children's lives in her study, with standard psychological laboratory experiments where the sibling relationship would be studied in isolation from that complexity. Following, she describes the importance and advantages of participant observation in answering her research question,

I felt like it was really the only way to get at the information that I wanted to get at was to start to blend into the atmosphere of where I was doing my study....I felt that being a participant observer made that as close to their most honest, comfortable selves as possible, was what they were able to share with me because I'd been there for a while, because I'd seemed interested in what they were doing and I wasn't always focused on these are my particular questions but that I was just...hanging out, deep hanging out and picking up on things that I wouldn't have ordinarily seen. I mean a lot of the observations were things that I wasn't really going after a particular type of interaction. I would happen to be there when it occurred so it really made the final research project possible in that it was a study of kids' sibling relationships from their perspective and from their day-to-day interactions. (3, p. 4)

Experiencing children's lives in the after school program as a participant observer enabled Catherine to study sibling relationships through daily interactions in a natural setting.

Patricia spent ten months studying several families who were transitioning from welfare. Even though Patricia knew that she might witness illegal behavior in her study,

she was surprised when she was invited by one of her participants to accompany her when she went to fence stolen goods. Patricia recalls,

That particular day...she showed me some of the jewelry she had....She just got a phone call from someone who was trying to buy this jewelry.... she was like "You know, I have to go do this." I'm like, "Well, let me just go with you" and she was like, "Yeah, come along" and so I went with her with her two year old. She was driving. I got in the car and I was holding the two year old because she was not in the seat for some reason (laughs), the car seat, but we were actually just driving right around the corner, not too far from where she lived but she had a hard time finding the actual street which made me aware that she had just moved there not too long ago but she wasn't very good at that particular neighborhood. (2, pp. 9-10)

Sharing this experience enabled Patricia to obtain valuable information about her participant that she might not have otherwise, such as her lack of familiarity with the neighborhood, and what she meant by "hustling." Patricia attributes gaining this deepened understanding about her participants' lives to being in the setting, experiencing or getting close to their experiences,

You can't understand the story without really sitting there in their neighborhood just watching who comes by, what type of neighborhood it is. For example, when we would hang outside, there's so much, everything from syringes on the floor to broken bottles and a lot of drunk people, the homeless lady that lived in the back, just the things you get exposed to while you're actually there physically with them and for several hours. The people who come in and out of their lives, even if you're there for just two hours in any given day. The ex-husband might come or the neighbors and...who these people are in their lives. I think you're able to absorb a whole lot more as opposed to just sitting in an interview and asking them. (3, p. 9)

Patricia observed that it was interesting to see the difference between what people thought was important and told her in an interview setting, and then being with them and seeing all that happens. Particularly for neighborhood studies, she asserts, "I don't see how people could fully understand, just how and in what ways these neighborhoods matter without just being there and seeing what they have to put up with sometimes or how safe some of these neighborhoods [are]" (3, p. 10).

Kate conducted a study of strippers and strip club audience members. She describes the value of firsthand experience in the strip club as an audience member, particularly with regard to understanding the dynamics and interactions of the other group members,

I got things out of it that I wouldn't have gotten out of it if I hadn't have been there observing and had only interviewed people because I wouldn't have been able to understand the nuances of the setting and watch how people interacted. Especially because the language of the guys when they reflected back on it or talked beforehand, they talked about individual strippers and maybe what they were wearing or what they looked like, or they might have talked about ones they gave money to...but they didn't ever explain the look on the strippers' faces the way that I noticed or how long one lingered at their table compared to another or if they moved over to get money from a certain guy, the subtle interactions between the people there or the guys didn't talk about the way they related to each other either. I mean they weren't analyzing the situation so there are things I certainly learned by being there that I couldn't have learned any other way. (3, p. 4)

Of her experiences going to the strip club with this group of males, she observes,

I was forced to sit there and think about it from the guys' perspective, try to see what everyone there was doing, try to listen and pay attention and try to think about the whole thing rather than just going, "Oh my gosh. This is disgusting. I need to leave"....it was a pretty disgusting place (laughter). It was dirty and these women weren't always treated well. I mean, are they being treated well at all if they're standing up and taking their clothes off? But I learned so much more about the people involved and the context and why it happens and I think that by thinking about it like that if I did come to the conclusion...that I wanted to somehow stop strip clubs from happening the best way to be able to do that was because I was in there and know what all the players are about so I think that's very valuable really for any situation. To figure something out from the inside. (3, pp. 10-11)

When she was in the strip club as an audience member, Kate described how on her walks back from the bathroom she was able to observe the dynamics of the setting in terms of what people were doing, how "the scene was happening," and how the setting worked. For example, all the staff were female except for the manager and the bouncer; the crowd appeared to be separated by who they were - college students sat in one place, town people sat in another place, and Hispanics sat together in another area; and,

although audience members were not supposed to touch the strippers, the strippers let them put money in their underwear, after which, the strippers gave them hugs and air kisses. For Kate, actually experiencing the strip club venue as an audience member was invaluable to understanding her participants' perspectives as audience members, particularly when they talked about their experiences later in the evening, once they had left the club.

The theme that I have illustrated is participant observation as experiential. Through these excerpts, I have shown the value of firsthand experience through experiencing portions of participants' lives or by getting close to the experience: such experiences enable scientists to access the implicit, the nuanced, the cultural, the relational, the changing, the contextual and the holistic, all of which contribute to deepened understanding of participants' lives and perspectives. Theresa summarizes this essential theme in her statement, "Being there to the extent that you can take on the perspectives of your real participants. So being there as fully as you possibly can so that you can really get inside their perspectives" (3, p. 8).

Multidimensional

In participant observation, the need for active participation and engagement in the lives of others result in scientists' self-partitioning and presence on different levels. Self-partitioning is required by participating while observing, role-taking, functioning as scientists and as humans, and deciding what information about their lives to keep private; embodiment in, and integration into, settings requires operating on the emotional, social, intellectual, and physical levels. Carried out concurrently, self-partitioning and presence on different levels results in the essential theme of participant observation as multidimensional.

Scientists' self-partitioning occurs as they: participate while they observe; operate as scientists and as humans; decide what personal information to make public and what

to keep private; and take on multiple roles. In Chapter 2, I discussed the need for participant observers to simultaneously engage in activities and participants' lives in settings all the while observing. I presented several typologies and continua proposed to help understand different participant/observation orientations in settings. The requirement for concurrent participation and observation in participation observation, from which its name derives, requires scientists to be involved in settings, both with the people and the activities while retaining the necessary distance to be able to collect, analyze, and interpret data critically.

Active participation in settings involves engagement of scientists' human selves as well as their analytical selves. In addition to emotional involvement, which I explained earlier in this chapter and will describe in greater depth in the following chapter, scientists also bring to settings their consciences, values, commitments, and beliefs. For some, these may present concerns in terms of the research agenda, desired neutrality and, in some research paradigms, detachment. Those scientists who embrace their humanity still need to recognize its effect and role in terms of influence in the study. Thus scientists need, at some level, to partition their research and human selves. This differs from the self-partitioning required to participate and observe. The latter is primarily a function of being able to multitask; participate in activities and engage naturally all the while being able to observe and collect data about the settings, often involving multiple actors, with a critical eye. The former, however, involves being able to recognize the personal aspects of being human, such as values, beliefs, assumptions, emotions, and personal history, and realizing their role in, and influence on, the research.

In addition to involving some level of engagement of scientists' human selves, active participation in settings requires scientists to consider their private selves in relation to the study. In bringing their whole selves to settings and developing

relationships with participants, scientists face decisions about what parts of their private lives to reveal and the effect of those contributions on the study. While some may be comfortable with bringing portions of their private selves, usually reserved for close friends and family, to research relationships, others want to partition and keep private certain parts of their lives. Thus, participant observation requires scientists to partition their public and private selves at some level.

Another aspect of self-partitioning arises from role presentations. Roles are part of everyday life; when participating in settings, however, scientists usually take on additional roles specific to their research activities. They commonly balance and carry out many roles simultaneously, resulting in partitioning of scientists' selves as they monitor each role for effectiveness in the setting and adapt them to meet the needs of settings and specific situations (de Laine, 2000), including taking on new ones. Thus, in participant observation, self-partitioning is a significant factor in successful role presentation.

The second aspect of participant observation that contributes to its multidimensional nature is the need for scientists to be present in settings on a variety of levels. This arises as scientists operate at the emotional, physical, and intellectual levels as a result of embodiment, and integrate physically, socially, and emotionally. Active participation in settings and the lives of their participants necessitates participant observers' presence on different levels as embodiment in settings makes physical, emotional, and intellectual demands on participant observers. Scientists experience situations in studies, from entry to exit, as complete entities; while intellectually they are gathering information about all that goes on around them and trying to make sense of it, they are concurrently engaged emotionally and physically. I described this aspect of being present on a variety of levels earlier in this chapter in the essential theme of participant observation as existential.

The other aspect of scientists' presence on a variety of levels arises from the need for them to integrate into their settings in order to fully participate in settings and experience participants' lives. Integration involves becoming part of the daily activities of settings and participants' lives to the extent that participants see participant observers as part of settings, and trust them enough to open up to them. Integration is not unidimensional; it needs to take place, wherever possible, on the physical, social, and emotional levels in order to facilitate scientists' access to experiences.

Adding to the complexity of operating in several dimensions simultaneously is the issue that competing requirements, such as observing while participating, may produce tension. If scientists are subjected to such tension in multiple realms over a sustained period of time, the experience can be stressful. Some may argue that operating on many dimensions is part of the human condition; that is, any research activity is multidimensional. In the following excerpts from my participants' accounts of their experiences, I demonstrate the theme of participant observation as multidimensional, as well as those aspects that differentiate it from the multidimensional character of other research activities.

In her study of interactions of first graders, Debbie found moving between participating and observing in the first grade classroom to be fluid and seamless,

Just to be there as they were doing whatever they were doing and to be able to move in and out of that observer-participant role to me was wonderful. I felt that I could do that very, very easily in that classroom. That I could be observing and someone would come over and say, "You're not done with your worksheet" and I could say, "Okay, I'm not finished with my worksheet" but I could also be observing at the same time and interviewing at the same time, asking. It meant maybe leaning over to the fella next door to me and saying, "What do you think's going on over there?" or "What just happened with you and so and so?" So for me I think that it was a seamless thing. (3, pp. 9-10)

Debbie describes this aspect of partitioning as "A good balance between participating so that you can get a good feel what it's about, so that you can relate to who you are

participating with and then make observations about how things are going, what's going on, just observe the interactions, observe everything" (3, p. 13). She describes, however, the difficulties she experienced participating and observing in a gym class,

In order to participate in gym I would have to be doing whatever it was and it took my attention to do that therefore I couldn't really be attending to all those other things that were going on, participating and observing so to speak. I got lost in that participation thing and that happened only once and I was like, "Okay, I'm going to observe here" because...I have to be careful that I'm not stepping on people. You have to be careful that you're not running too fast, not running slow enough or whatever and I was very much aware of that and it just took 10 minutes and it was like, "Okay, all I'm doing here is participating" (laughs). I mean maybe that's okay but I felt that there was too much for me to be worried about...if I was being safe with the children. (2, pp. 23-24)

In this situation, she found that she had to concentrate on the physical activity in which she was participating in order to avoid bumping into or stepping on children. Thus, she could not participate and observe.

Debbie also recounted difficulty in partitioning her various roles in the setting. She was a practicing health professional while she conducted her dissertation research described here. She recalled difficulty with relinquishing her practitioner/consultant role during her first few days in the classroom; primarily she found herself evaluating children as she would in her professional role. After this realization, however, she managed to discard this role. She recalls this self-partitioning, "I really got rid of that role as a therapist and I have to say sometimes my adult role, I would forget that. I mean if I were really engaged with the children doing whatever....I would say most of the time if I were interacting with children I would try to interact at their level and that's not hard for me just because of my [training]" (2, pp. 20-21). She describes how she tried to manage her multiple roles, "When I walked in the door of that classroom I didn't think of myself other than trying to find out what's going on. I thought of myself as a researcher. I didn't think of myself as being Debbie the adult, any of those other roles that I had and I was very conscious of that" (3, p. 17). Thus, Debbie's experiences with self-partitioning,

in terms of participating and observing, and multiple role presentations, presented difficulties at first. After overcoming these problems, however, she managed to operate in a manner that met her research needs.

In her study of sibling interactions in an after school program, Catherine felt that she did not manage to become part of the community she studied. She recalled that she did not have “an official way of fitting in” (2, p. 11): she was not a child, a staff member, or a parent. She explains,

In a lot of ways I was a kid because I did what the kids did. I didn't do what the staff did. I did more like what the kids did but the kids certainly saw me as an adult....[I was] clearly not a kid but because I didn't discipline them, because I didn't tell them what the schedule was, because I couldn't give them permission to go to the bathroom or any of that. I wasn't actually a staff member either so it was this weird in between thing. (2, p. 9)

She did, however, create her own role of Catherine in the community, and in that role became part of day-to-day activities over her two years in the setting. Catherine recalled sitting at tables and doing activities with the children, whereas the staff sat together and watched the children, often yelling at them. She was older than all of the children and most of the staff, adding to her anomalous status as far as her role in the program. She thought that some of the parents assumed that she was a staff member; she was present occasionally when they came to the office to talk about their children and sometimes they asked for her opinion. Because she was an anomaly in the setting, others in the after school community assigned her a variety of roles which led to her self-partitioning to fill these roles. She recalls one incident where a parent asked her to talk to his child and assume yet another role in the setting,

One time [the director] came to me and said, “This kid has been peeing in a bucket in the bathroom at the program and something's obviously bothering him. His father called and is very concerned and wants to know what the problem is and so we want you to talk to him.” I mean this kid was a participant in my study and I wasn't doing a clinical interview and I don't have any training in that. I said “That's not (laughs) really what my training is in.” “It doesn't matter. We really just want to get to the bottom

of this.” So I talked to the kid and I did what I was doing anyway, this open-ended interview about family and siblings in particular and it came out that his parents were getting divorced and he was confused about it. (2, pp. 10-11)

Catherine’s anomalous role in the community led her to assume a variety of different roles throughout her study, sometimes simultaneously, as she participated in the setting.

As with her multiple role presentations, Catherine recalled little difficulty handling the partitioning of her scientist and human selves. When she found herself in situations where she determined that she could help children in her study, Catherine recalls relegating her research agenda to the back burner in order to respond to her participants’ needs, “Especially like in that intense moment when I’m talking to this kid about his parents’ divorce. I knew that wasn’t part of my study. That wasn’t going in there and that was just trying to stay really present for that kid and any of the little training I’ve had as a volunteer counselor, anything, just stayed there in that moment for the kid” (2, p. 24). In such situations, Catherine did not hesitate to temporarily put aside her research agenda to help the children.

Regarding her self-partitioning to observe and to participate in her study conducted in a fifth grade classroom, Courtney observes,

For me to be a participant observer really meant to be a participant yet have metacognitive awareness of what’s going on....It would be hard to think about it in terms of percentages because when I’m participating I’m still observing but being a participant as much as 100% if allowed to but then always being the observer....also recognizing that at times that 100% participation also made it more difficult for me to be the observer in terms of...there were things I just didn’t even pick up on because I was so involved as a participant....So I do think there’s a danger in terms of becoming too involved in the research if one doesn’t have enough checks and balances....But for me to be a participant observer means to be a participant but not forget that I need to be observing. (3, p. 7)

Courtney explained that the classroom teacher guided her in terms of how much she could participate in the classroom setting. For Courtney, being an active participant included working with students, “hanging out” after class or at lunch with them, and

talking with them. She perceived that students saw her as a teacher and as a friend; they invited her to slumber parties, brought her gifts, and involved her in activities with their families. As they did with the classroom teacher, they also approached her with personal problems. Such activities illustrate Courtney's integration into her setting socially, physically, and emotionally.

In terms of partitioning her private and public selves, Courtney described the circumstances that resulted in sharing with a key participant what she considered to be private information. This participant shared a lot about her personal life with Courtney. Although the topic of the work did not necessitate that she respond similarly, Courtney felt a need to share similar aspects of her own life, for a variety of reasons, including empowering her participant and helping her participant to feel less vulnerable in the context of the study. She did this even though she noted that she does not usually disclose this type of information to relative strangers.

In her study, Courtney played a variety of roles: she was the principal investigator's graduate student and advisee, the director of the research study, her key participant's "friend", and friend, teacher, and mentor to the students. In addition, within the context of the larger study, Courtney was conducting a pilot study of her relationship with her key participant. As a result, she found herself in a web of relationships and roles, requiring self-partitioning in order to fulfill her obligations to those with whom she was in relationship. She describes the emotional and personal commitments she had to two people related to the study, and how she tried to manage them,

The emotional commitment to the teacher, the emotional commitment to Peter [the principal investigator]. There were times where I just felt very torn between these two relationships. Peter, who I felt I owed a lot to and who I was developing a good friendship with and obviously it led to more so I felt very indebted to for what he had done for me as a student. I just owe him a lot intellectually but at the same time feeling that he's also in a position of power and that I needed to protect the teacher who I felt a

strong commitment to and...he was benefiting a tremendous amount from her and I didn't want it at her expense. So emotionally I was committed to both of them and very tied to both of them. (3, p. 8)

She recalled unintentionally violating her key participant's trust by sharing information with the principal investigator (Peter), and then needing to trust Peter that he would not violate her trust. Thus, in her study, although Courtney experienced few problems with self-partitioning in terms of participating and observing, she encountered issues in terms of her private and public selves, due to her key participant's personal revelations to which Courtney felt obligated to reciprocate with her private information, and her multiple roles.

In her study conducted in a Montessori school that her children attended, Jane assumed a variety of roles simultaneously. As she was a teacher, Jane introduced herself as such to the children but qualified that she was not a Montessori teacher and that she was there to learn. She was known also as the mother of two students. Further, through her children's attendance at the school, she knew some of the teachers well, and considered one, in particular, to be a friend. As mentioned previously, the year before Jane conducted her study, the region experienced tremendous job cuts and as a result, enrollment at the school decreased significantly. As a nonprofit organization, the school could not sustain itself with such dramatic reductions in enrollments and just before Jane started her study, the school was sold. She describes how this situation impacted her roles,

I walked in a couple of mornings and there were teachers crying. The administrator who was let go immediately came to shut out her desk Friday, be gone by Monday....as a parent I was actually privy to conversations with teachers, conversations with other parents when that whole thing happened. I knew the person who...had bought the school. I could have used that, which I never would have, but if I had been unscrupulous I could have [said], "Well, here are the teachers that are really upset about this situation and this is what was said." I was [in] the role of parent as a researcher and understanding as an educator myself how those teachers were disrespected in so many ways and it angered me but I had to maintain my composure as a researcher. I had to maintain

my composure as a parent and not get into the pettiness. I had to keep always above that because parents would come to me and say, "Well, you're researching here in this environment. You must be hearing things from teachers." (3, pp. 18-19)

As Jane recounts, her multiple roles required self-partitioning and managing, particularly as her study progressed and the situation in the school evolved.

In terms of her integration in the setting, Jane described it predominantly in terms of physical and social aspects. She sat on the floor in classrooms with the children, performed recess duty with teachers, ran errands for teachers, such as getting band aids, ate lunch with children and teachers, and played basketball with children. She explained integration in her setting as having a multidimensional role; she was not just sitting and writing. She described her integration as "immersion into the culture" (3, p. 32). She explains this phrase,

It was really just an opportunity for me to be a part of that Montessori culture for a while so yeah, immersion into the culture. Again, in thinking in terms of trying to get down on the child's level constantly, not only just physically sitting on the floor but trying to understand when children were communicating with each other, what they were really saying and then trying to interpret that through Montessori's lens so that's the immersion in the culture. Eating, playing, working, and certainly eating with the teachers as well. (3, p. 32)

While Jane's experiences with role presentations became more complicated as changes in the setting occurred, she found integrating into the Montessori culture easy.

When in the strip club conducting her study of strippers and strip club audiences, Kate found herself occasionally losing sight of her observer role. She explains how she helped to balance participating and observing in those instances,

When I thought that I was losing sight of the whole picture or felt like I needed to get more perspective, I could easily excuse myself and go to the bathroom because as far as guys were concerned, women have to pee all the time (laughter)...So that was one way to get back to observing because then I could get up and walk to the bathroom. Then particularly when I was coming back and in the bathroom, I could think about what I had been seeing, what I wanted to focus on to make sure I could remember

things so I could write them down later. When I'd walk back I was able to observe the room much better than walking to the bathroom and see what the guys that I knew were doing, what other people were doing, just how the whole scene was happening so that was one way to balance participating and observing. (2, pp. 15-16)

On her first trip to the strip club, Kate brought a notepad and made notes in the bathroom. Afterwards, however, because the strip club setting was new and interesting and made such an impression on her, she realized she did not have any difficulty remembering the details.

In the context of partitioning her private and public selves, Kate's experience in her study was unique among my participants. Due to the circumstances under which she conducted her study, her participant who was a stripper thought Kate wanted to be a stripper, encouraging her to apply for a job at the club. In order to maintain the relationship, Kate played out this role to the extent that she applied for a job as a stripper. In the course of the job "interview," the club manager instructed her to remove her shirt. Kate recalls,

He said, "Okay, take off your shirt." So I said, "Okay" so I took off my shirt and he said, "Okay, take off your bra" and I said, "Okay" and I took off my bra. He stood there and he's like, "Okay, you've got the job. Put your clothes on"....I learned more about the setting by taking my participation one step further and I was perfectly comfortable with doing that. I've had my shirt off at marches in South City for pride (laughter). Yeah, the setting was different but I knew what my reasons for being there were for so a guy ogling my breasts for a few minutes...it wasn't even a few minutes. Basically it was, "Take 'em off." Looked at them and saw that I had no qualms, that I wasn't shy or anything and I put my shirt back on and he was like, "Put your shirt back on." I didn't think it was going to bother me. (2, pp. 18-20)

Thus, even though her disclosure was of a very personal nature, Kate felt comfortable disclosing.

In her study of families participating in a program for transitioning from welfare, Patricia describes the challenge of needing to participate and observe simultaneously when engaging with participants,

I think that you can do both at the same time, interact with the families and at the same time have this kind of thing running in your head and making notes...so I think it's very possible....I think one of the challenging things is to do both things at the same time. Interact with them very normal and have them be comfortable with you and you with them but at the same time you're jotting notes in your head. I think that takes skills because you can get wrapped up in a story (laughs) that they're sharing with you or whatever's going on. (3, p. 21)

While she found participating and observing simultaneously challenging at first, Patricia explained that she was very careful not to go far beyond her research role in terms of responding to the human needs of her participants. She described this in the context of providing young girls with information about going to college,

“How is it to go college? How did you do it?” They had all these questions and again, I think because there were very few role models for them, I was always conscious of the fact that I was a potential role model for these young girls and I think their parents at times saw me as that too....I had actually to be very careful not to do more than I should given that I was a researcher. Prior to when I was an undergrad I did academic advising (laughs) and I did high school outreach so it was very easy for me to do that, provide them with that information which clearly was lacking with a lot of these youth. So for me it was that struggle with clearly I'm studying this and I'm seeing how few ties these young girls have to people who do have the knowledge or the resources to allow them to say go to college and my desire to provide them with that information yet the purpose of the study was just to understand their lives and to document the fact that they don't have these ties, that they have limited information. So how much I gave them, I was very careful most of the time. (3, pp. 17-18)

Patricia describes the struggle she had partitioning her human and research selves in this situation,

With the young girls it was more about me and wanting to help them and me being the researcher, that fine line but, I mean you're dealing with human beings and their own personal struggles and it's not that easy to just be a researcher and just remove yourself. Most of the times you can but I felt I found myself very much moved by these people, which is part of the rewarding piece I think of doing this kind of research but at the same time, you start to worry about (laughs) or you start to think about them in a different way, not so much as research subjects. (3, pp. 19-20)

Patricia's account points to the challenge that scientists may face with self-partitioning in terms of the research aims and the fundamentally human response that certain circumstances may provoke.

In terms of partitioning her private and public selves, Patricia explains that she was selective about what personal stories she shared with her participants,

With one of the families I shared that I had a fight with my boyfriend and that got her talking about men and her perspective of men (laughs) but I didn't share the details of my relationship with them whereas with a friend I would have....I did share other things that I felt were safe with selective families so when I would hear a family tell me about an immigration story about their family, their grandfather, father came to the United States, I could jump on that, "Oh my grandfather too, my dad too. Oh, he has a similar story like that. I remember when he told me this." I can share those types of things but never too personal whereas with a friend you would. It depended up on the family and what I felt I could share with them and how much. With some families I shared certain aspects of my life and with others I didn't whereas my friends they know everything (laughs). (3, p. 22)

Patricia differentiated between what personal information she shared with her participants – certain, selective aspects – and what she shared with friends – “they know everything.”

In contrast to being a consultant, Bridget recounted finding that, as a participant observer in her study of work in a health and safety organization, people wanted to know information about her. She recalled being unsure how much and what to disclose; she did not want to tell a ‘rubber story’ yet she didn't want to reveal her full self. She recalls that it was nerve wracking in the beginning, trying to figure this balance out,

I had to think about how I presented myself and how I got involved with people in a very serious way. I had to be clear about my boundaries and I didn't know that at first. I knew that would be an issue, that you had to think about your relationships with respect to the people and to the site or over time....So I tried to work on that and thought about, “How do I present myself? I'm not a microphone roving around. I have to also give and I have show expression and I have to show affect.” I'm a fairly sincere person so it's kind of hard for me to, for a sustained period, to pretend to be something I'm not so I had to think about how to do that. I think those are important things to figure out in life in general. How do you exist within a group and be yourself at the same time and how do you maintain boundaries that are important? What are the things that are important? Is it okay to share your personal life? How much of your personal life? Things like that. (3, pp. 1-2)

She recalls how, when one key participant was sharing personal information, she thought, "I'm just going to listen and extend something of myself but only to a degree. I'm going to extend the parts of me that I think are appropriate so I'm not going to expand the horizon of topics but if he wants to talk about dating....I maybe wouldn't choose to engage in that conversation but if we're going to talk about that then I'll participate in a way that I would say is less guarded" (2, p. 9). She explains her reasons for sharing information about her recent break-up with her boyfriend with participants,

The boyfriend thing, which I'm extremely private about, I think I told everyone in that office (laughs)...I don't know, for some reason that felt right. That felt like I was giving them something and they knew what was going on with me and it's something that everybody knows something about and they can get involved in and they can give you advice and they can tell you, "Don't worry. There'll be another guy coming around" or "You need to try eHarmony or whatever." (3, p. 20)

She shared this personal information as a way of making connections with participants.

Bridget also described different dimensions of her integration into her setting. On the social and physical levels, she joined staff at lunch, played softball, went for drinks after work, attended staff meetings, helped in the laboratory, and physically did the work of the staff. On the emotional level, Bridget recalls,

Suzanne was the person that made me realize that I could have worked there and I could have had friends there so we really had this relationship that two colleagues would at work. It was sort of this confirmation that yeah, there's something clicking here in this environment....We also talked about lots of personal things, life, and decisions and careers and things like that. I think the meaning was really this feeling of having a girlfriend at work, the office friend that you go out and have a coffee with when you need to just get out. (3, p. 14)

Even when she was interacting on a personal level with participants, Bridget was still cognizant of the research context; she acknowledged that she could not reciprocate Suzanne's comments about people in the setting as it would be inappropriate.

Judi conducted research in a setting, an independent network of educators, where she had been a participant for more than twenty years. She described her

experience with partitioning herself as a participant and an observer as exhausting. She recounts the tension of participating in an intense activity, for which she had to be well-prepared, while simultaneously observing and taking notes,

I had to prepare for those readings and because the readings were engaging and I am in the field of education...the content of what we were doing was interesting. People could probably do a study of me and predict what she's going to say about this thing and if I looked bewildered or if I looked tense or I was staring too much at one person or my face said something that it normally wouldn't say. It would be also a disservice to them because the focus would be on me and not on why we were there and in order for me to get an authentic picture of what was going on there...I would have to again be fully participating so that the focus is on this content in the middle and not on what is Judi writing about me now in her doctoral research. (3, p. 9)

Judi describes the challenge of balancing participation with respecting participants in terms of interactions with participants and behavior in settings,

It's participating fully as much as possible. It's really being authentically there. I think that participation is there out of respect for the other people....you owe that to people to be fully there and engaged but at the same time knowing what you're doing when you're there so there's a level of engagement that's respectful just in that human way. Then all the mass of stuff that's invisible to other people that's there so incredible preparation yet keeping that level of spontaneous participation but a knowledge base supporting that spontaneous participation. (3, p. 8)

Judi observed that the obligations of being a participant in the institute and respecting other participants in terms of being fully engaged competed with her need to gather data. She explains that the partitioning was not so much a case of a "dual persona" but rather "having to just be there on a variety of levels and in such a different of way of being there" (3, p. 3). She expounds, "It's almost like witnessing yourself in both places so it's almost like there's a third space. This is you participating over here, you're aware of the research thing over here, you have predetermined focuses from what you've set up, this is happening and the tension is this witnessing part in the middle that's seeing both happening and trying to maintain that balance" (3, p. 21).

I conclude this essential theme of participant observation as multidimensional with the following excerpt from Judi's account that I think encapsulates the essence of participant observation as multidimensional,

It's the tension again of maintaining your focus so you have a focus for the day, and you have the larger context of all that knowledge of what you're looking out for. There are a lot of levels going on....the...academic context I'm bringing to the situation in terms of being a researcher. Having experienced a variety of roles. Being engaged with something. Being that witnessing person and then distinguishing the two contexts of informal social things like meals or going for walks or going to concerts, and now those things that were outside the seminar times were not really downtimes for me either....But most of the time just watching intensely for what's going on and seeing it...as an outsider in order to portray it... But to be in that flow and then to be in that flow as a writer and as a describer you have to hold things in your memory that you know that you're jotting down mentally that are going to go later in fieldnotes. (3, p. 24)

In participant observation, self-partitioning and presence on different levels stem from the need for active participation and engagement in the lives of others for research purposes. The self partitioning required by participating while observing, role-taking, functioning as scientists and as humans, and deciding what parts of their lives to keep private, in conjunction with operating on the emotional, social, intellectual, and physical levels demanded by embodiment in, and integration into, settings means that participant observers are constantly functioning in several dimensions concomitantly. The challenges resulting from this theme are evident in my participants' accounts of their experiences, and emphasize the uniqueness of this research activity.

Situational

The essential theme of participant observation as situational arises from three aspects of the research activity: 1). different situations present different opportunities within the research context; 2). different situations influence, impel, and/or necessitate scientists to assume different roles, including role assignment by participants; and 3). situational factors impact relationships between scientists and participants.

Participant observers' experiences are a direct result of active participation in settings and engagement in the lives of others. The physical presence of participant observers means that they have the opportunity to experience what their participants experience, or get close to those experiences. This includes the routine and anticipated as well as the extraordinary and surprising, all of which provide valuable insights and information about the phenomena under study. The latter often result from unique circumstances that scientists could not plan for, nor control and, if they were not physically present in the location experiencing daily life as it presents itself, would not encounter. Different opportunities present themselves within the research context, often resulting in situations whereby scientists access information serendipitously by virtue of 'just being there.'

As discussed in the previous theme, role taking is a core feature of participant observation work. In addition to scientists' everyday life roles, when participating in settings they usually take on additional roles specific to their research activities. By involving themselves in the lives of others, participant observers have to be willing to do what their participants do and, to a certain extent, relinquish a level of control that they might have had in their relationships with participants because they want and need to establish and to maintain relationships with these individuals. This often results in scientists responding to circumstances by taking on different roles or by responding to roles assigned to them by participants. Although they may opt to take on particular roles (role taking), scientists rarely are able to select their roles in settings. This is partly because roles are influenced by a variety of factors, including context-specific circumstances (different situations require different roles) and decisions by participants (role assignment), which often are triggered by situational factors. Thus roles are predominantly situational in nature.

Further, relationships with participants are fundamental to participant observation. (I explore these in more depth in Chapter 5.) Relationships are developmental in nature and constantly evolve in response to circumstances (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Hall, 2000; Hinde, 1996; Maxwell, 2005; Seal et al., 2003). Thus situational factors play a central role in their development. Using excerpts from my participants' accounts of their experiences, following I illustrate the essential theme of participant observation as situational.

In her study of home-school connections in a fifth grade classroom, Courtney would go through the garbage looking for data after students cleaned out their desks. She recalls one time when she found something unexpected,

A student had written her will. She was the outcast in the classroom for a number of reasons like she always smelled in class, she didn't dress well, she was quite poor. I forget her actual religion but she was religious in a way that she couldn't participate in a number of activities and parents were always coming in challenging the topic of instruction. She was just a very sad, very depressed child and we knew this but didn't know how much. (2, p. 25)

This situation could not have been planned. However, it provided Courtney with a lot of insight into this student's life as well as allowing the classroom teacher to follow-up on the child's well-being.

In her study, circumstances often led to students and parents assigning Courtney different roles. She recounts one situation where a set of parents assigned her the role of intermediary between them and Meg, the classroom teacher,

One set of parents were very upset with a number of things....One thing... the mother in particular, was that Meg didn't teach enough spelling. I really thought this was blown out of proportion but the girl's father I guess is a horrible speller, absolutely horrible, the mother is a wonderful speller. They have two daughters, one of which is a wonderful speller, the other of which who happened to be in Meg's class wasn't....The mother began telling me what a bad teacher Meg was and she doesn't teach spelling and she doesn't this and she doesn't that and she expected me to agree with her. I didn't and I talked about what Meg was doing in terms of teaching spelling. It wasn't a regular spelling test every week, it wasn't this, it wasn't that but here it was...and the mother actually pretty much

came around. Although she wanted to see more spelling tests, she came to recognize that Meg was doing a lot in terms of teaching her. (2, p. 15).

This role assignment to Courtney by these parents was situational; once the issue had been resolved, they did not assign this role to her again.

Courtney explained that as a result of her own upbringing, she finds herself willing to form relationships if she thinks they meet the needs of others, taking on what might be considered a therapeutic role. She observed herself playing this role in her research relationships, including the one she formed with Meg, the classroom teacher in her study. She explains, "We did things together. We socialized and I shared things with her and she shared things with me but I think what I shared with her was more in response to what she shared with me and wanting to have a more even relationship" (3, p. 16). Courtney realized, however, that they did not have a lot in common. She recalls,

She's considerably more conservative than me. I'm very judgmental. I am as a person but I'm also very open minded so although I'll make an immediate judgment, it's certainly open to revision and immediate revision if necessary. She's not. She's very firmly rooted and change takes a lot of effort for her. I think that in many ways she's racist and homophobic and had a lot of sentiments that I don't share so these things kept us from ever really forming the sort of bond that I would consider a close friend....we just didn't have enough in common. Her head was in such a different place than mine was at the time despite the similarity in ages, in external features, being divorced. (3, pp. 16-17)

For these reasons, she described this relationship as a friendship that was based on "something else." She concludes, "[If it hadn't have been for the research] we would never have had more than a conversation. If we ran into each other somewhere, [we] could have been friendly but [we] would have never developed a relationship. Even though in a lot of ways I think she's a good person" (3, p. 17). Thus, from Courtney's perspective, this relationship was a result of the situation; it was formed for research purposes and did not progress beyond that research purpose. This was primarily due to fundamental differences between Courtney and Meg that she details above.

In her study of families participating in a social service organization, Theresa recalled two events that she could not have foreseen, and that she experienced only by the virtue of being in the setting. The first occurred when she had just arrived at one of her participant's home,

Talk about moments that you can't plan for. Pulling up on the bus...and there was the guy from the electric company in the process of disconnecting them and she knew what was going on. Of course it took me a while to catch onto this whole thing but she was alerted to it as the bus pulled up and she was paying attention to who was at the electric meter and I was just trying to figure out everything that was going on. Of course now I understand what was probably going through her mind and she knew she was being disconnected and what sorts of things was she going to say and how was she going to respond but then being actually with her and watching her and helping her as she sprung into action to do what she needed to do to get the electricity back on so that she could feed the kids properly and bathe them properly and take care of them so that DCYF didn't come and take her kids away....you have to be there to catch that stuff. You know [I] couldn't have said, "Can I come over at two o'clock on Wednesday afternoon so I can see the meter man disconnecting you and watch you go through the whole process of getting reconnected?" (2, p. 8)

This event provided Theresa with valuable information about the resourcefulness of her participant as well as contextualizing her participants' often verbalized fear of the state removing children from homes due to allegations of inadequate care. The other event occurred when she was with her participants who were service professionals,

I sat in with the program staff...and they started talking about all the kids and what was going on and sort of assessing their development and documenting it and everything. I said, "So how do you share this information with families" and they were like, "We don't share this information with families." A red flag sort of going off. I mean I had bells and whistles. I had everything that I could do so that I could just stay there as casually as I was and just raise that question just as innocently and when their response was "We don't tell families this," I was just like going crazy inside, jumping up and down. I'm...trying to be just "Okay, ah ha," just say, "Huh" (laughs)....It was like, "Okay, it's not my place to say "What are you guys doing? (says loudly) Do you have any idea what you're keeping from families and what you're not telling them? And how is this consistent with your goals?" But that was not my place. (2, p. 15)

In this situation, Theresa gathered important information about a critical issue in the program by virtue of her presence during that particular discussion; the service

professionals were not telling families about their children's development. This ended up being an important finding in her study.

Situational factors also influenced the different relationships that Theresa had with the wife and husband, Karen and Brian, in her primary family. She explains,

My relationship with Karen was more significant than it was with Brian because more often than not Brian wasn't there and Karen and I were the ones who were going all over the place and I was the one who would bring some relief to her life....I know that I changed the context by being there...I would interact with the kids so that they weren't driving Karen crazy, like if the phone rang or something I would try and keep them distracted....I think that Karen probably saw me as a friend first because she knew that when I walked in the door, I was a part of her life. I was part of the family and it would bring some relief in small ways but actually very big ways because then she wasn't isolated with the kids. She had somebody there, an actual adult who could talk in complete sentences and not scream and yell and make demands on her. So I think that that was why she probably saw me as a friend first....but I think her life...especially got so crazy that when I walked in the door it was a relief for her. (3, pp. 18-19)

Thus, in this family, situational factors, primarily proximity, impacted the nature of Theresa's relationships with the adult participants.

In her study of welfare families in public housing projects in two areas of a city, Silvia observed that her ability to develop good relationships in each setting was consistent with the differences in the neighborhoods: in one neighborhood, she was able to develop ongoing relationships whereas in the other one she was not. Here, situational factors in terms of neighborhood characteristics impacted Silvia's relationships with participants. In the neighborhood where Silvia was able to develop ongoing relationships with participants, early on in her study, she realized that she was becoming part of the women's social networks in that they tried to assign her roles that were not being filled in their lives. Silvia's professional training was as a psychotherapist. She recounts how, in one relationship, she assumed the role of a psychotherapist in response to a participant's disclosure of a former abusive relationship,

At one point, we were talking about whatever, it had nothing to do with this, but she said, "This past weekend I was with friends and I drank too much and it was almost like I had relived all this horrible stuff and my friends were there and they told me I really needed to get some therapy." (laughs) It was interesting because she talked about it for about an hour. She just told me about the beatings and told me about how she had tried to get out and how hard it was and how she was homeless....It was a really horrible story and so she told me the whole story. I definitely put my hat in as a psychotherapist there....for her I was psychotherapist in this situation. She talked to me and I basically gave her loads of support but I also gave her some information about her daughter. I really wanted her to understand how this could impact her daughter. (2, p. 23)

In this situation, Silvia did not hesitate to provide her participant with the support she needed, and that she, Silvia, was qualified to provide, albeit outside the context of her researcher role. She describes another example of role assignment by her participants; a woman asking her to talk to her children about college,

I would come over, she would feed me, she would give me coffee, all while we talked. She always had incredible foods and we were sitting eating something and her kids came home. Her kids would come straight over to me and give me a kiss. They were just so well-mannered...they would give me a hug and a kiss and she told them to go and do their homework. Then she said, "Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, come back here. Okay, Silvia, tell them what it is like to go to college." I said, "Oh." So I told them what it was like to go college. (2, pp. 23-24)

In this case, Silvia assumed a role model role for the children because this woman did not have anyone in her social network attending college. Patricia recounts a similar experience,

With the young girls I think...they did look up to me because I was in college....I made myself accessible to them to ask me questions about college and I found myself at times giving them advice....at the end of the day once I was leaving, once these interviews were done, they had questions for me too because there was going back and forth so I would give them the information they wanted. "How is it to go college? How did you do it?" They had all these questions and again, I think because there were very few role models for them, I was always conscious of the fact that I was a potential role model for these young girls and I think their parents at times saw me as that too. (3, p. 17)

In these situations, Silvia and Patricia found themselves assigned and assuming the role of role model with regard to going to college for some of the adolescents in their studies

due to circumstances - lack of these role models and participants' expressed needs – in the setting.

Patricia recalled the circumstances that contributed to her forming a very close relationship with one participant in her study

I think she felt that we shared similar values. I think I got that message from her and I felt like in some ways she in particular really liked the fact that I was hanging out with daughter....I think she trusted me with so much information that I feel that it really changed the relationship and for her in particular....I think she became very close to me and I think the reason why is because a lot of the families that I worked with are very isolated....Her condition makes her stay at home a whole lot more and then on top of that, her family, instead of being supportive they are more dependent on her than anything else so the people around her end up being more of a burden I feel....I guess I wasn't (laughs). I was just there to talk and time for her to share about her life and she had a bunch of stories so I think she really valued that.... She's very protective of daughter, who she hangs out with....I think she felt I was a good girl....So I was very touched by just how close she became to me. I mean talking about death is not easy or a number of other issues. When she was almost raped and she had an abortion. I mean these sorts of topics are very difficult to talk about and yet I didn't foresee that she would go there. This is a neighborhood study (laughs). (3, pp. 18-19)

Although Patricia forged close relationships with other participants, the situation with this woman, particularly her lack of mobility, her ill health, their shared values and background, and Patricia's willingness to listen, resulted in Patricia forming a relationship with her that was particularly close.

In conducting her study of strippers and strip club audience members, Kate responded to the situation of her participant, Jasmine, assigning her the role of potential stripper by applying for a job. She recalls the circumstances influencing her participant's decision to assign that role to her, and how others in the setting viewed her,

Being in the situation as a woman was interesting because my role was definitely being qualified. What was I doing there? I mean the fact that Jasmine was pushing me to become a stripper because why else would a woman be there? Because I wasn't saying I was a researcher, so I didn't have that role. I was just a customer. Why would a woman be a customer in that situation?...so here I am, as far as they're concerned, a straight woman with a bunch of guys, what would I possibly be doing there unless I was trying to become a stripper so I got pushed into that role. Females

have certain roles in that setting so it was like I couldn't possibly be doing anything else....obviously Jasmine was pushing me into that role but how did others see me there? What did the bouncer think? I mean the manager obviously thought, "Well, this makes total sense." I mean two minutes to get the job (laughter). (3, p. 26)

Kate got the job as a stripper but she did not have an opportunity to dance. She explains, "I actually made the decision whether or not I was going to [dance] when other circumstances occurred that made me have to change what I was doing quite a bit in the study" (2, p. 3). Here, situational factors came to bear on her study later albeit in a different manner, impacting how Kate proceeded with her study.

In her study of work in a health and safety organization, Bridget recounted assuming a variety of roles in response to situations. She recalls taking on the role of colleague in a situation where a senior administrator told her of his decision to promote a specific individual,

He had two people that were at the same level. There was him, there was an extra level where he had no-one and then there were two people, either of whom could have been put into this middle position, higher position. He said, "Oh, I'm going to pick Bob" and I said, "Why?" and he gave me all these reasons. I said, "Why wouldn't you consider the woman?" He said, "Well, I don't think she's really interested" and I said, "Well, I think you should think again." So [we] had this frank discussion. I said, "Just because she has a family doesn't mean she's not committed and she's not interested. And by the way, I think she's really good at these things" and I named a few things. He was like, "Yeah, you're right." (2, p. 10)

In this situation, Bridget assumed a different role based on her knowledge of the people involved and the organization, gained through her presence there. Bridget recalls another situation where she took on a collegial role with a staff member for a more personal reason,

By...the end of the summer, I was so tired of him bitching about how unfriendly people in the office are and how nobody wants to have lunch with him or talk with him, I finally said, "Why don't you ask someone?" "Oh" (laughter). You think so?" "Yeah." "Everyone's eating in their offices." "I've been doing it all summer. It works. People say yes." And then he was like, "I think I'll do that." There's this big open space where they have a table....where people can sit and eat and nobody uses this table and I said, "Why don't you sit down, bring your lunch, do an

experiment. Sit down with your lunch one day and see who joins you?” Well, sure as hell there were three people sitting around him as I walk in....He was an engineer. I said, “Have you ever read anything about social networks, how people relate?” “No.” So then he was reading about social networks. (2, p. 14)

Several participants assigned Bridget the role of organizational consultant because of her affiliation with the management school where she was a graduate student. She recalls their reasoning, “Well you’re at Barton. You must know how other organizations do this. What do you think the answer is?” (2, pp. 16-17). She explained that even though she was asked to play this role, she did not because she did not have the requisite knowledge base. This shows that even though participants may assign scientists specific roles, scientists do not have to assume them.

These excerpts illustrate three primary aspects of the theme of participant observation as situational: 1). how different situations present different opportunities within the research context, and the value of ‘being there’ for participant observers in terms of gathering information presented by unique circumstances and combinations of situational factors that could not be anticipated, planned, or controlled; 2). how different situations influence, impel, and/or necessitate scientists to assume different roles, including role assignment by participants; and 3). how situational factors impact relationships between scientists and participants. This essential theme arises predominantly from the need for participant observers to actively participate in settings and become involved in the lives of others in order to understand them. These excerpts also demonstrate the relative lack of control participant observers have in their studies compared with other research activities, as well as the ways in which inquiry using this research activity is emergent.

Processual

I conclude this chapter by examining the last essential theme that I derived from my participants’ accounts of their experiences; participant observation as processual.

Process, according to the Oxford English Dictionary (2006), is “a continuous and regular action or succession of actions, taking place or carried on in a definite manner, and leading to the accomplishment of some result; a continuous operation or series of operations.” By the term processual, I mean characterized by process.

Bradburd (1998) describes participant observation as a dialogic process of building meaningful models of the worlds of others which are then constantly altered through interactions and encounters with them that leads to understanding those studied. In participant observation, scientists are engaged in a cyclical process that involves concurrent observing and participating, taking notes, reflecting on their observations and experiences, striving to make sense of their data, and beginning the cycle again the next day in the setting. In participant observation, Powdermaker (1966) refers to the “mistakes and of learning from them, and of the role of chance and accident in stumbling upon significant problems, in reformulating old ones, and in devising new techniques” (pp. 10-11) as the process of serendipity.

Participant observation as processual arises from the experiential and relational nature of participant observation. Actively participating in settings and becoming involved in the lives of others, two essential components of participant observation, are themselves both processual in nature. Each involves a series of processes that are essential for success. DeWalt and DeWalt (2002) identify some of these processes as entering the field, building rapport and establishing close, trusting relationships. Further, settings may have processes that dictate participant observers’ actions in that setting. For example, when conducting studies in organizations, scientists need to follow the organization’s processes in order to experience everyday life in that organization.

As explained in the previous chapter, participant observers have two purposes in settings: to participate and to observe. The observation component reflects the research intent; that is, to collect information for analysis and interpretation. In participant

observation, however, observing while participating over an extended period of time means that data collection, analysis, and interpretation are ongoing as scientists engage in the lives of others and the activities of settings. These are not discrete, one-time activities; they are ongoing, over time and constitute a process as participant observers conduct their studies in settings, sometimes for years.

Participation in settings enables scientists to collect information *in situ* and aids in understanding others. Actively participating in settings and becoming involved in the lives of others are themselves both processual in nature. Further, they involve processes that are essential for scientists' successful engagement in settings and relationships with others. In order to understand those whom they study, participant observers engage in as many activities as possible that constitute certain aspects of their participants' lives. To share their lived experiences, participant observers need to insert themselves into their participants' daily routines and experience as much as possible. In doing so, the processual nature of the experiential - over time, experiencing, observing, talking, listening - provides access to the complexity of people, their lives, relationships, their situations, and their communities.

As well as being processual itself, being engaged in the activities and lives of others necessitates that scientists engage in processes that are essential for their success, such as gaining sponsorship, and/or that are inherent in settings. For example, some settings, such as schools, workplaces, organizations, and programs, have processes that scientists need to follow in order to experience everyday life as well as integrate successfully.

An additional component of this theme is relationships with participants as processual. In order to understand those whom they study, participant observers develop relationships with participants. This facilitates insertion into their participants' daily routines and experiencing these routines as much as possible. Relationships are

processual in that they consist of a series of actions over time, developing and evolving in response to circumstances. In addition, developing and maintaining relationships with participants requires that scientists engage in processes that are essential for enabling such relationships to develop, such as being accepted and integrating into settings. The process of acceptance into settings is integral to building relationships with participants. As such, it is not a matter of either acceptance or rejection but instead, a process that involves earning the trust of participants over time. Integration is a process that participant observers want to happen in settings with participants and others. It occurs in conjunction with acceptance and involves time, interactions, and actions that hopefully lead to the development of trustful relationships. Following, I demonstrate the theme of participant observation as processual as experienced by my participants.

Silvia described several aspects of the processual nature of participant observation that she experienced in her study of welfare families in urban public housing projects. One aspect of processual for Silvia was how she strived to maintain her objectivity. She noted that it involved being “grounded in the literature”; this involves knowing the literature and “bouncing off it all the time.” Here, she describes this process, as well as how rewarding she finds it,

I’ll leave there and my brain will start computing things, my experience against theory and I’ll be doing all of that while I’m in the car or in the subway and I’m taking notes and I’m always thinking, “I love this, I love this, I love this, I love this”....We talked about the formal and informal, the subjective and the objective, and I think to do that bridging, to get that information and to then tie it to the theory that’s coming up in my head all the time and writing notes on that, I think all of that is tremendously gratifying....It’s an energizing experience to do that but I think what really gives me satisfaction is the process. It’s the coming out of the informal type, of being inside, and the transition to being on the outside which to me...is always couched in theory. I think it’s that little piece that I think is the most rewarding for me because it puts value in the interactions I’ve just had and it puts value in all of the education I’ve had and that process of going from the inside to the outside. (3, pp. 3-4)

Silvia observed that she is happiest when she is doing participant observation. Part of that feeling derives from being able to “test the empirical observations against theory.” For Silvia, the satisfaction lies in the process – of observing, the empirical, and then putting that in the context of theory. For her, this process puts value in the interactions that she has had with participants as well as in her education.

Other aspects of process that Silvia noted are that participation involves talking and comprehending, engaging in a natural manner while the researching piece involves observing and taking notes, whether mentally or by writing or tape recording. Both are done simultaneously as processes. She asserted that tape recording facilitated her participation by allowing her to engage naturally and to not miss potentially important information while trying to figure out if she had written something down correctly.

Silvia also described the processual nature of her relationship with one participant. After meeting in the context of the research, they discovered that they shared interests, such as music. After Silvia had interviewed her several times, they went out together. While Silvia was abroad for a year, they kept in contact and upon Silvia’s return to the United States, they became friends. She remains friends with this person today. She notes that they never talk about the study, “It’s much more of a moving relationship.”

Silvia describes the processual aspect of her worldview and the value of qualitative research in terms of that worldview,

I just don’t think certainty is out there and the truth is not out there either....that doesn’t mean that everything is always moving, but I think you cannot capture how the process behind things or the fluidity attached to these things unless you do it qualitatively. It’s realizing that the world does not work this way which is decisively...with certainty, and concretely and static. None of that is true. The world doesn’t work like that....what I think that makes me understand so much more is why qualitative methodologies and ethnography is so much more realistically going to capture this than something quantitative....If you’re going to capture reality, and you see reality as moving all the time and valuing the process

behind that reality, you have to, by default, want to do qualitative work. I just don't see how there is another option to that. (3, pp. 19-20)

Silvia's view of reality as moving all the time leads her to value qualitative research as it captures the process behind things, the fluidity attached to things.

In her study of work in a health and safety organization, Bridget's activities of observing, interacting, and experiencing were determined by the process of the organization and its work. She recalls,

They would say...."Well, we're going over to the North Building to do an inspection right now." "Can I come?" "Yeah, come along. You can carry this." So you would end up carrying something and you would go over and you would go through the inspection process with them. You can ask some questions. Then after that something like that with three people, people might go in three directions. "I have to go here." "I have to go here." "I have to go here." So I continued on with one of them. Eventually I would get back to the office, see who's having lunch, go to lunch with people....Then in the afternoon, there might be a meeting, there might be people around that I could talk to or follow. (2, p. 4)

The process of the setting structured Bridget's work - accompanying staff to inspections, carrying things, talking, observing, experiencing, going back to the office, having lunch, attending a meeting, and maybe going out again on inspections in the afternoon.

Like Silvia, Bridget describes making sense of her data as a process that involves being grounded in the literature,

The way I just described, it is washing over you and I think...that you just have to be open and let things come in and not screen things out and not judge things as relevant or irrelevant or things you want to see or not want to see. But I think the next step...you can start to name some of these things and these patterns that you see in the world.... Where not only do you start to see things but you see individual people's biographies and stories and lives, but you start to see these lives in the grid or in the framework of some theories. You start to be able to name behaviors and theories so resistance would be one name for certain behaviors. (3, p. 6)

Here, Bridget describes making sense of data as a process involving a series of successive actions, one of which involves seeing the data in terms of existing theory. Another aspect of process Bridget recounted in her study related to developing relationships. She describes the relationship building process with one particular participant, Suzanne,

Suzanne...had been in the organization three years. She felt very new and she felt very outside. I got talking to her because she worked in another organization that had tried to do a similar change so she had experience in a different organization. I wanted her to compare her experiences and say how it was different. From there we got to know each other better. She told me about her own career and her own plans. So she told me things about the office and about herself and about work that were helpful for me on the project...but we also talked about a lot of things that had nothing to do with the project. They more had to do with getting to know her. So for instance, I learned she had cancer. I learned about her layoff at a previous employer. I learned about her parents' divorce. I knew a lot about her. She wanted to start a new career. I learned about that which she eventually went off and did. (2, p. 12)

Unlike Silvia's experience recounted above, the relationship that Bridget describes here was confined to the study setting.

In recounting her experience in her study of the impact of a literacy program for homeless women, Betzaida recalled several aspects of the processual nature of participant observation. Betzaida volunteered in the organization that ran the literacy program. She describes the processual nature of becoming accepted by staff and the women in the program,

I didn't have [the study] as my plan from the beginning and so then later, as I got more involved with them, at a teacher's meeting I started to express my ideas and everybody encouraged me. They saw ...this was going to be an evaluation of what we're doing and this will be useful to us so the teachers were very supportive about that and because the students already knew me, it was a perfect environment. (2, p. 7)

This excerpt illustrates acceptance in terms of being a process that is integral to building relationships; key elements in this process are time, continued presence, and actions that promote trust.

Yet another aspect of the processual nature of participant observation for Betzaida was sponsorship. Sponsorship of scientists in settings is often critical to the success of their studies. While for some participant observers, the sponsorship process may be limited to making contacts and/or giving permission to enter a setting, for others sponsorship consists of a process of support in a variety of ways over time. This was the

case for Betzaida in that the organization's executive director's sponsorship of her was a process of ongoing support, assistance, and guidance that spanned her multiyear study.

She explains,

Definitely it also would not have been possible without the Executive Director...without her constant support and also giving me access to all kinds of archival data about the organization....I wouldn't have had any of that information. I interviewed her extensively...literally without actually getting the Executive Director's approval for this, I would not have been able to do it. She was just amazing....She wasn't so interested in so much about my theoretical framework or feminism even, but more like, "Okay, what programs can we develop now to help the women?" (3, p. 10)

Jane's experience with sponsorship in her study of creativity in a Montessori school mirrored Betzaida's in terms of being a process of ongoing support and assistance. As well as being the person who gave Jane permission to conduct her study in the school, Jane describes how the director, Pat, periodically checked in with Jane on the progress of her study, "She was the person that would come in and check on me and say, "Are you getting into the classrooms you need to get into?" and she would do the periodic "How's it going?" I never really needed anything because the teachers were so accommodating but she was wonderful" (3, pp. 29-30). She also backed Jane when she ran into difficulty. Jane describes one such situation,

I got a call from the director and Pat said, "We've had a little bit of a problem and I don't want you to worry but this parent actually called...the Chair of the Institutional Review Board....This parent was a recent Ph.D.... she said, "I'm Dr. so and so and I haven't seen any IRB paperwork." This is where the director really covered me. She said, "Listen, that paperwork went out. Every parent got it in their box. She's been collecting this information. She hasn't gone into that [class]room because she hasn't got all the parents' signatures yet. She has done everything she's supposed to do." (2, p. 22)

In this instance, the school director facilitated resolution of the problem to everyone's satisfaction.

Jane also described elements of her experience participating and observing as processual. She recalled selecting a particular lens for the day through which to observe in a classroom. Then, she explains,

I would try to make sense of [my observations] but without those questions in the morning, I would have been floating all around so (laughs). When I would do my notes at night at the little coffee shop, I would make sure before I left I had three or four questions that were in the thought process and then usually I would come up with my real questions in the shower in the morning (laughs) and go, "Okay, this is the information I want." Because as you well know, this stuff is all encompassing and you think about it all the time. I had the luxury of having a commute that was an hour one way and an hour back and so I would have at least two hours a day to think about it. (3, p. 15)

Both Silvia and Jane noted that the process of analyzing and interpreting data was constant, occurring both in and out of the setting.

Catherine describes how the processual nature of her experience studying siblings in an after school program made her study possible,

It was over the course of several years so I could see variation in the types of interactions they had. Any two kids are going to be in a fight and if I had gone on just one day and seen these two kids fighting I would have said, "Oh, they have a terrible relationship, they fight all the time" and made all these great conclusions based on that one day but if I went back the next week or the next month or six months later and saw something entirely different. I think that's especially true of kids, especially in this age group, that they are changing quickly too. I literally saw kids I felt like change from kids to adolescents and that really changed the sibling dynamic a lot. Kids that used to play with each other, as soon as the older one became an adolescent, 12 or 13, they would start to ignore them or talk badly to them but since I'd seen them two years previously in the summer camp or whatever, I knew that wasn't the whole relationship, that wasn't what it was all about and it was going to continue to change. So it made the study possible....I was able to see a range of different interactions and they said totally different things on different days and that became what I presented in my dissertation, was there are these constantly changing relationships. (3, p. 4)

Catherine watched the constantly changing relationships among siblings and others, and the changes within kids as they entered adolescence. She ascribed her ability to access the complexity and the dynamics of these children's daily lives, as well as their developmental changes, to the process of regular observations and interactions in the

context of the children's lives in the after school program. Catherine also describes her experience integrating into the after school program in terms of process,

I became almost see through in a lot of situations because I was just there. I think they would act in ways later that I would be observing that they wouldn't have if I hadn't been just kind of hanging out being there. Also the fact that I began my relationship with the entire organization, with the staff, with a lot of kids that ended up being in my study, as entirely a participant and not as a researcher but that all came into play as I was then part of that place and the kids sort of trusted me and saw me as part of the organization. (2, pp. 23-24)

Catherine attributed her prior relationship with the organization (and participants) in a non-research role and the length of time of her relationship to her ability to build trust in the setting. This allowed her to become integrated to the point that she believed that the staff and children did not act any differently when she was observing than when she was not present.

In her study of families participating in a social service organization, Theresa planned to be in her setting for about a year. In order for participants to feel relaxed around her and to assist with her integration into the setting, she obtained informed consent from her participants early in the study. This explained her presence initially and allowed participants to become comfortable with her presence over time, enabling her to become integrated into the setting so that participants could learn to trust her and share information. She describes this process,

I got the consent up front and maybe it was really weird this lady Theresa was riding the bus with us and stuff but then by the time February, March, April rolled along, I was just such a part of the process that they were telling me the stuff that they were doing. I had a whole lot more insight. They were much more relaxed on the bus and talking about what they were doing on weekends and evenings and who was sleeping with whom and what their kids were doing and who was in jail and how they got there. Just the ins and outs of their daily life so they never forgot that I was a researcher but they trusted me. (2, pp. 22-23)

Another process that Theresa recalled was her experience with a primary participant which she described as “a process of building up a trust relationship” (2, p. 6). She explains,

It was really a natural unfolding of relationship. It was like, well how do you know who your friends are? How do you pick your friends? They are the ones that I get along with, who seem to like me, who seem to be okay with our relationship. It was just a natural relationship, because if somebody just didn't seem into this, I didn't push them. There wasn't going to be one of those things that was going to work. They needed to be open with me and I needed to be open with them. (2, p. 7)

Here she describes the process of establishing the research relationship in terms of establishing a friendship. The research relationship followed the same process, and she applied the same criteria, as in a non-research context.

In her study of collaborative inquiry in an independent network of educators, Judi's sponsorship by the director was ongoing throughout her two year study. Judi was a long time participant in the setting but her researcher role was new. Initially, the founder of the institute, Barbara, sponsored her by helping her find ways to take the first steps in her new role as a researcher in the setting, by telling people about Judi's study and by making a public announcement. She explains,

Being sort of a shy person as it is, Barbara really facilitated this move by sitting down with me and helping me find ways to make that first step. In other words, to take myself seriously as a researcher and to find...what my questions were and to think about what engaged other people....By helping me set up the first interview, by saying to people that I had a research project and making it a public announcement. (2, p. 2)

She continues,

I think she understood why I wanted to get a doctorate but I don't think in her heart of hearts she believed I needed to do that. It wasn't her thing but when I decided it was mine, she supported me in it. She really did and by helping me with that first interview session and shape the second session and to sit with Melanie and myself and generate more questions for me to help me again, keep that “What are those emerging focuses based on key words?” and helping me find my way through this. (3, p. 17)

By demonstrating her ongoing support, the institute's founder, Barbara, who was revered in the setting, facilitated acceptance of Judi's new role in the setting.

Judi describes how her new role in the setting as a researcher enabled her, through a process of observations and interactions, to gain a different perspective on the experience,

I would be with Lucy and say five different sessions over that time, what Lucy would say, how Lucy would sit, how she would hold her body and what would spark Lucy, to see the shift on people's faces, to really get to understand the orchestration of all these people and how they were interacting and feeling....As a participant you're just there. Lucy's saying her part but you're thinking about the ideas and Lucy's your friend. We talk about things but that was a very different way of being in those groups, I think, of seeing that larger view of things. (3, p. 5)

Judi's new (research) role in the setting and the process of participant observation enabled her to see individuals in a new way – not just as participants or friends – but seeing a larger view of the experience – getting at the complexity of multiple relationships and motives and desires and fears, etc. She also describes how the process of the setting structured her research,

The day extended from 7:30 until people went to bed at 10:00 or 11:00 so it was a full day....I really had to structure that day.....Going to people at breakfast and having a conversation...then come back to the first welcoming gathering. Every morning we gathered as a group and laid out the agenda for the day and laugh together as a group and do whatever....I would get back to that a little early and quietly sit there in that room for a good 20 minutes before people started filtering in and getting their coffee and sitting down. I would try and write up what I heard at breakfast just so I wouldn't forget...on the spot, real shorthand quick notes. Then there would be a three-hour long seminar in the morning and that would be taped....Then at lunch....I did the same thing I did at breakfast (laughs) which is listening to people's conversations....then there would be another afternoon seminar from like 1:00 to 3:00....after lunch when people were clearing up and everything, I would go up to my room ostensibly to brush my teeth or whatever but again, quickly just jotting down something that stood out to me that I could follow up on....Afternoon seminar was taped. Then if I did individual interviews, they would be after 3 o'clock. I might go for a walk with somebody....did I take off dinners? I think I did. Dinners were just being part of the group....So the evenings then were just with that old transcribing machine from 7:00 until sometimes 1:00 in the morning... typing up the fieldnotes and transcribing as much as I could every night. (2, pp. 12-14)

This lengthy excerpt from Judi's account reveals how the process of her setting – an institute – structured her research in terms of how, when, and where Judi gathered data, and from whom.

These excerpts from my participants' experiences illustrate how processes are inherent in participant observation. They include: the successive and integrated actions of observing, analyzing, and interpreting over time, leading to the evolution of studies; processes within settings that determine, to some extent, how participant observers conduct their work and may impact data collection, sometimes facilitating it, sometimes inhibiting it; and, process involved in building and maintaining relationships, such as being accepted by participants and integration into settings and participants' lives.

Conclusion

In this chapter, using excerpts from my participants' accounts, I have delineated five essential themes of participant observation as a research activity that I have characterized as existential, experiential, multidimensional, situational, and processual. In the next chapter I examine participant observation relationships. For participant observers, lived relations with others is the "doorway" to their participants' lives and thus is a critical component of the research activity.

CHAPTER 5

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION: A HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS ACTIVITY

As previously discussed, participant observers involve themselves in the daily lives of people in order to learn about them and social life processes. They are expected to develop relationships with those being studied in order to gain participants' perspectives and to understand meaning in the setting. In anthropology, Carrithers (2005) asserts that the production of knowledge depends on the creation of relationships between scientists and participants, and the significance of what is learned through these relationships equals that which is gathered through systematic inquiry. Accordingly, the relationships that participant observers form with participants for research purposes play a pivotal role in their studies. This importance is reflected in an observation by one of my participants, Courtney, who stated, "I think it's impossible to engage in participant observation without attending to relationships" (3, p. 4).

In the previous chapter, I identified from my participants' experiences and characterized five essential themes of participant observation arising using the following terms: existential, experiential, multidimensional, situational, and processual. In this chapter, I endeavor to describe the essence of relationships formed with participants for research purposes arising from their accounts of their experiences. I identify from my participants' experiences and, using the following terms and phrases, describe five essential themes of participant observation relationships: participant observation relationships as characterized by a professional/personal duality, built on

commonalities, and trustful, respectful, and reciprocal. Within each theme, I describe constitutive components using my participants' words wherever possible.

As I pointed out in Chapter 3, these accounts of relationships are from the scientists' perspectives and thus the themes reflect that perspective only. Relationships, however, involve two people; the participants' perspective, missing here and throughout most of the literature, is extremely important and sorely needed.

The Essence of Participant Observation Research Relationships

The Professional/Personal Duality

The first essential theme that I derived from analyzing my participants' accounts of their experiences with relationships in participant observation is these relationships as professional and personal. This theme reflects the dual nature of relationships formed during participant observation.

For scientists who are new to settings, the majority of relationships are formed initially to serve the interests of the research agenda. As my participants' accounts illustrate, however, many times scientists and participants alike end up sharing personal information in the process of building and maintaining such relationships. Sometimes these relationships continue after studies finish, turning into personal relationships once the research (professional) interest has ended. Those scientists who take on research roles in settings where they are already participants introduce the research purpose into existing personal relationships.

Scientists' relationships with participants formed during studies involving participant observation take on a variety of forms, depending upon factors such as the level of personal involvement and the length of the relationship. Some participant observers form relationships with participants that continue after the study is finished; others form relationships that are less intimate and are temporary in that they end as soon as the scientist exits the setting. More commonly, however, participant observers

form a variety of relationships with individuals in settings, varying in level of intimacy and duration depending upon the individuals involved.

Several of my participants described their relationships with their participants in terms of being personal but containing a professional, or research, aspect. In accounts of their experiences, they described their relationships primarily in terms of the human element of the relationship, including care, love, and friendship, how that played a significant role in the relationships, and the ways in which it had meaning for them. In contrast, other participants, who described their relationships as professionally-based but with a personal element, recounted how they encountered dilemmas in wondering what and how much of themselves to share as well as feelings of obligation to their participants. Some participants described developing relationships of both sorts in their studies.

Relationships developed over time, even a relatively short period, that involve trust and closeness may lead to acts of self disclosure that involve the revelation of personal and private experiences (Birch & Miller, 2002). Such revelations may be on the part of participants only, or also by scientists. Berger (2001) explains, "When researchers are open about their own personal stories, participants feel more comfortable sharing information....Sharing my stories with those engaged in my fieldwork fosters relationship formation and exchange between us, allowing all involved to feel a greater sense of rapport" (p. 507). In participant observation, such revelations introduce a personal element into an otherwise professionally-based relationship.

Historically, distance between scientists and research participants has been viewed as necessary in order to maximize neutrality and objectivity. More recently, however, different social science perspectives have promoted different "ideal" scientist-participant relationships, including friendship (Tillmann-Healy, 2003), collaborative (Punch, 1986) and, reciprocal (Wax, 1980). Such perspectives are somewhat simplistic

in that they appear to lack consideration of the participants' role in determining the nature of the relationship, the complexity of human relationships, the realities presented by settings, heterogeneous subjects, and aims of the study, and that in most settings scientists engage in webs of relationships where individuals interact with each constantly rather than developing isolated, separate relationships. Scientists' relationships with participants formed during studies involving participant observation undoubtedly take on different forms.

The personal/professional duality of participant observation relationships differentiates relationships formed during this research activity from those formed in most others. The duality arises from the need for participant observers to develop relationships with participants in order to engage in their activities of daily living over time for research purposes. In employing most other research activities, scientists either do not have the opportunity to develop such relationships, or are discouraged from doing so in case they impact objectivity. One aspect of the personal/professional duality derived from my participants' accounts of their relationships that differentiates participant observation relationships from those formed during other research activities is emotionality.

Participant observation is elementally a human activity; the formation of relationships between scientists and participants is at its core. As in non-research situations, these relationships lead to emotional demands on scientists. All of my participants describe emotional connections with participants formed as a result of their studies. They describe these connections in terms of the elementally human aspect of their research relationships: feeling compassion, empathy, sorrow, anger, joy, 'moved', 'touched,' affection, powerlessness, attachment, care, and love.

Silvia recalls of her relationships with participants in her study of welfare families in urban public housing projects, "I became friends with the women I was following too.

I mean, some more than others but I definitely became friends with them too” (2, p. 18).

She explains the happiness that her relationships with her participants gave her, not necessarily in terms of the intellectual gains, but more due to the human experience,

I’m happy because, it’s not because I’m gaining the intellectual knowledge, it’s because I have this experience with these people who are helping me do that. It’s that aspect....I’m gratified that I have access, that I have had this kind of experience with these people this particular day that has an incredible amount of meaning somehow and that’s the kind of stuff that makes me really happy....I think that there’s an awful lot of care from both sides so it is in a sense an aspect of love if you become very close to a family and every time you come by she makes you this big dinner and offers you this and offers you that and the kids come in and give you hugs and kisses. All of that’s about love you know so I think that a lot of the relationship aspect has to do with love. I think it’s love and then there’s a lot of respect. (3, p. 13)

The feeling of joy that Silva derived from these relationships arose from the human connectedness and care aspects, rather from the knowledge she gained (albeit an important aspect in terms of her research).

Some of Silvia’s participants made her part of their social networks, assigning to her roles that were not being filled. This required different levels of personal involvement on Silvia’s part, including sharing information about her experiences going to college as well as drawing on her professional training as a psychotherapist. In other situations, she was invited to join a family at the beach and was invited with her son to a family’s birthday party. Silvia maintains relationships with many of the families to this day. She describes these relationships now,

I don’t think I do anything different....I just go in and see how they’re doing and catch up which is something I used to do before and that’s it. There’s no agenda so that’s what’s different....It’s just finding out how they’re doing which is the same thing that I used to do before. It’s much more social and I’m not investigating anything besides my own little agenda to know how they’re doing. (3, p. 8)

She describes her ongoing relationship with one service professional who participated in her study, “With the woman who was the director of the services there, we never talk about that stuff now. I mean our relationship is solely based on some other, whatever. It

[has] nothing to do with the research I did but we met there (laughs). It's interesting because she's a really good friend. She's stopped doing that and she's a musician" (2, p. 21). As seen here, Silvia felt very comfortable with the dual nature of her relationships. She did not talk about any challenges presented by these types of relationships.

Similarly, in her study of siblings in an after school program, Catherine described many of her relationships with the children as friendships. She explains what friendship meant in this context, "Friendship with these kids I think was more like we had conversations and interactions that were removed from the research experience. It was all research in a way, my being there, but we would talk about things" (3, pp. 11-12). She provides an example of such a relationship,

Like with the boy I have in mind, I felt like we had this understanding. He would knowingly lie to me about stuff but he knew that I knew that he was lying. One day I came in and he was getting in trouble and he looked at me and I asked what was up and he said, "I had nothing to do with it." But he kind of smiled because he knew that I knew. These little moments... like a secret bond, like an understanding that I knew where he was coming from and he knew that I knew where he was coming from. Just that level of interaction or that I started to know what they liked or things about them....There was one point in an interview with the boy and he was talking about having a lot of responsibility in his family and he was the oldest boy and he had to take care of his younger siblings and I said something like, I didn't use the word expectation, but I said, "Are there expectations on you?", something like that. He said, "Yeah" and I said, "Do you know what I mean by that?" and he said, "No" (laughter). So...joking but also very honest, like I felt very sure that we had gotten past the point where he was like, "I know what she wants to hear, I'm going to say it." He was really chatting as opposed to trying to figure what I wanted to hear because we had just gotten to know each other well enough and they were old enough. (3, p. 12).

One young girl with special needs called Catherine her "best friend." Catherine explains the circumstances surrounding this relationship,

She had been born in South Land but [the family] had lived here since she was a baby and she was 13 when I met her. Her physical disability was that her left arm basically didn't work....Then she kind of hopped instead of walked because one of her legs, she had to just kind of move it along with the other one. She also would talk to herself a lot. You could not understand what she was saying. Every once in a while you'd hear a word but she'd just be babbling to herself...But she definitely had these physical

limitations and social limitations because kids made fun of her constantly for her babbling and for not being able to play sports....She would get very angry and upset when they teased her and she would storm off and be very dramatic about it and yell. (2, pp. 15-16)

This girl's physical and social limitations resulted in the other children in the after school program teasing her, and shunning her. As a result, as Catherine describes, this girl become attached to her,

It was very easy for me to hang out with her because she wanted to hang out with me and I was her friend. I was the only person who would play with her and talk to her in the afternoon. Occasionally her younger brother would play with her....when I would show up for the day, she would jump up and down with glee and just give me a hug. She was so excited to see me and when her mom would pick her up she was like, "Oh thank God you were here. She'd been looking forward to this." It made me really have to go. I mean there would be some days when I was like, "Oh come on, I just don't want to go" but I knew she was waiting for me there. (2, p. 15)

This relationship presented challenges for Catherine in terms of the tension that it presented between her professional and personal needs. Catherine explains, "She would call me her best friend which was hard because I'm not her best friend and it made it hard for me to not spend all my time with her because I needed to be observing whole groups" (2, p. 7). She continues,

I felt like I didn't really know how to deal with...her neediness of our relationship. She would get very jealous if I interviewed other kids. I would go into other rooms and she would burst into the room half way through an interview and I'd say, "Just a minute, I'll be with you." She'd be very angry but again, it was something that the staff couldn't really help me with because they hadn't really been given enough information or permission to address any of her issues. The parents were strict. They were not interested in us helping her in that kind of way. They just wanted her to go some place in the afternoons and be treated like everyone else but she obviously wasn't." (2, p. 17)

Catherine's relationships with most of the staff members at the program contrasted with the friendships that she developed with the children. She explained that the staff appeared judgmental, and if they said anything when she arrived at the program for the day, it was usually a sarcastic comment. She recalls, "I mean there'd be days

when I'd walk in and they'd be talking to themselves and I would have to approach them and it was awkward. They were mostly high school students and people who were taking college courses, so 17, 18, 19 years old. So I always would have this nervous feeling going in but that was mostly around the staff" (2, p. 20). Even though the staff members were not participants in her study per se, they were an integral part of the setting in which Catherine conducted her study.

Catherine described the importance that she placed on her connection with children and her need to reconnect with them as she did have this opportunity in her academic program in graduate school. She explained how she was able to fulfill this need through her study of siblings in an after school program and her relationships with participants who were children. She observed, "Some days I was just frustrated that I had my study to do at all. I just wanted to hang out with them and for whatever reason that's something I'm comfortable with so I was able to sort of remind myself of that and get back into that while doing my research was just great" (3, p. 10). As recounted in the previous chapter, when Catherine found herself in situations where she determined that she could help children who were in her study, Catherine made her research agenda secondary to her relationship with the children and being present for them.

Bridget often struggled with the professional/personal duality of participant observation relationships in her study of work in a health and safety organization. She describes feeling obligated to her participants to extend her relationships with them into more social or personal realms than she might have done otherwise, "You want to keep up relationships, you want to keep in touch. I guess I felt that people did give a lot to me and they helped me a lot. I didn't want to come in and get what I needed and leave" (2, p. 15). Bridget tried to fulfill this obligation despite the fact that she found it difficult to talk about herself. She recalls that she thought of one participant in particular as a work

colleague or “a girlfriend at work.” She differentiates this relationship from that of being a friend, however,

When I say a friend in a larger sense, I can't imagine calling her on a Sunday afternoon and saying, “I'm going to yoga this afternoon. Do you want to come with me?” So more integrating each other into our personal lives. I couldn't see that happening so in a sense it was really this work colleague friend where you share things but you remain very separate so what is a friend? I don't know. She's a friend in the sense that we did share a lot of things that were quite personal and we talked about our lives and we explained our lives to each other but I can never imagine meeting her husband. I know a lot about how she feels about her husband and how she met her husband and some of the things that they've been through and how she feels about her son but I couldn't imagine ever meeting him. I think that's a distinction with me. (3, p. 17)

Here Bridget qualified the difference between her relationship with this participant as a work colleague and that of a friend. Most of the relationships formed in her study were professionally-based but with a personal element. She describes challenges presented by the personal/professional duality in participant observation relationships, “It's this weird trade off. It's a very personal type of work and it feels weird sometimes. These people are in a sense your data, the source of your data and they are your data, and it feels very strange to treat them that way sometimes because of course, as I said, they're these really interesting, crazy, wonderful people and that's hard to figure out” (3, p. 19).

The amount and type of information shared by participants often triggered emotions in my participants. Bridget described feeling respect and appreciation for participants in that they trusted her with their often very personal information, making them vulnerable. For example, she recalls feelings of sympathy for one participant when he shared with her a troubling incident, “He was shaking, he was upset. “I think I'm going to get fired. I'm a few years from retirement. Look at me. I'm 56 years and I don't want to work until I'm 70. This letter is on my file and I think they're after me”” (2, p. 9).

Even though her study has ended, Bridget remains in contact with some of her participants. Her study was part of larger one, so occasionally she will meet with her

participants to get information for the larger study. She explains, “Sometimes [the principal investigator] will say to me, “I don’t understand what’s happening with this. Will you go and find out?” So I’ll call Keith and say, “This is a research-related lunch. I’ll buy. This is what I’m looking for.” Then we’ll talk about personal things too” (2, pp. 10-11).

Likewise, Patricia often described the challenges that balancing the professional and personal aspects of her research relationships presented. She recalled finding herself becoming friends with some family members involved in her study of families participating in a program for transitioning from welfare. She described feeling attached to her participants because they shared so much information with her and confided in her. She called this a privilege, explaining “I highly value the fact that they trusted me with all that information. So I think that’s why I’m attached to them in that sense, at a more psychological, emotional kind of level perhaps” (3, p. 24). She attributes this level of emotional involvement to helping her to better understand her participants’ perspective, “You feel their personal struggle in some ways and it touches you which makes the research that much more meaningful in the end and allows you to understand these people’s lives and just how complicated they are and how much they struggle and whether to help” (3, p. 24). She qualified, however, that these seemingly personal relationships were not her primary intent for being in the setting; that her research intent took precedence. She explains,

You’re not principally there to be a friend or to be someone’s role model or to be someone to comfort and so you have to remind yourself of that role oftentimes because the relationships can gear you to be the role model, to be the someone who needs comfort at that time and I think you can be some of that at the same time, but just sort of constantly remind yourself why you’re there. (3, p. 21)

When talking with her participants about doing things after the study, she recalls, “I had to be very conscious about what’s likely, what’s not likely to happen, what would

be appropriate, what would not be” (2, p. 26). Going out to a club with a participant was “a little too much because that’s really like hanging out, like you’re my friend” (2, p. 26). Like Bridget, she made a distinction between what she would do with participants versus what she would do with girlfriends. She noted that she would not be in contact with her participants for the rest of her life, as she might be with friends, and that her participants knew that she was there to do a study that was going to end. She acknowledged, however, feeling guilty about not having been back to visit some families whom she thought would expect her to, even though they knew the study would end.

Kate described several types of relationships with participants in her study of strippers and strip club audience members. She was a friend of a primary audience member participant, Tom, prior to conducting the study and thus introduced the research purpose into an existing personal relationship. She recalls that asking him to take her to the strip club and interviewing him did not alter their relationship, “Still like a friend situation which is how I could so easily just be part of that audience group and joke around them because I knew him for so long. But when I interviewed him, the questions were more of a formal situation” (2, p. 14). With the group of men who were her audience member participants, she reported that she became temporary friends. She explains this descriptor,

They were valuable to me learning about the setting. They were the ones that I was observing and talking to and then listening to them talking about the setting so they were certainly key in that manner. But also they followed Tom’s lead to trust me and that showed in what they were willing to talk about with me and in front of me I think and include me there. Also it was reflected afterwards in that if I ever saw them around town, at a bar or something, they’d be like, “Oh hey, let me buy you a beer” kind of a thing, whereas before it was if I recognized them because there were some of them I hadn’t met but other ones they would acknowledge that you know them but not a social sort of thing. I felt like in the context of the study they got used to me being there pretty quickly and just someone else in the group so the relationship was easy. (3, p. 20)

After the study, while Kate remained in the area, she continued to socialize with them, going out and playing poker. She even returned to the strip club with them one time.

Her relationship with the stripper, Jasmine, however, was different. On the advice of strippers whom Kate knew prior to the study, initially she did not tell Jasmine that she was a researcher. Due to circumstances that arose later in her study, Kate did not have the opportunity to reveal her researcher role to Jasmine nor interview her. Kate explains how these circumstances affected her relationship with Jasmine,

I wish I could have been her friend (laughs)...Thinking about it then based on shortly after being in the setting, talking with her, talking with the two other strippers I know, and certainly after reading all the research ...nothing she said to me could have been true. I mean there might have been nothing that was true except, "I want you to be a stripper and here's how you do it" or "My feet hurt and that's why my shoes are off." It all could have been fake story to get sympathy, to get friends in the context, to play her part in this intimacy game, get money, who knows? Her three children might not have existed and her boyfriend, maybe she didn't have one. That was her way of keeping the people separate....I wish that I knew who she was but I will never know. I only know what she told me and even that person I wanted to know better and interview outside the setting. So, I liked her and I didn't feel bad for her ever. I felt like I wouldn't do this but of course she had her story which explains her life in such a way that, whether it was her coping story or whatever it was, and she always said, "I make plenty of money." So there was no relationship with her other than someone I saw. Like a bar relationship. I guess if you meet people at a bar you never know. If you never see people again you never know if they told you a lie or not....it's kind of the same thing in that setting. I don't know if she told me who she was and I didn't tell her everything about who I was. (3, pp. 15-16).

In talking about her relationship with Jasmine, Kate described how she reflected on her relationship and potential actions in the setting so that she would not embarrass herself or do anything to negatively impact her developing relationship with Jasmine. She recalls, "I made sure I kept track about what I was feeling about the situation rather than just letting it go so that I would be comfortable with wherever I let myself get led in the conversation" (2, p. 27). Thus, in this relationship, Kate's professional considerations (the research) were predominant.

In describing this essential theme of participant observation relationships as having a professional/personal duality, I illustrate the personal as professional and the professional as personal aspects of participant observation relationships, and some of the issues that they present to scientists in terms of balancing research needs with human needs. The excerpts from my participants' accounts illustrate differing levels of personal involvement that my participants had in their relationships with individual participants, the different levels of personal involvement in relationships with participants within a study, and how my participants thought of these relationships in terms of labels such as friend and colleague. Further, the excerpts demonstrate the role emotions play in research relationships in trying to understand others. This aspect is significant in differentiating participant observation relationships from other research relationships. In sum, these excerpts indicate the complexity of human and research relationships, emphasizing the futility of categorizing or defining ideal participant observation relationships.

Built on Commonalities

Relationships that participant observers form with participants for research purposes play a pivotal role in their studies. Participant observation relationships are different from many non-research relationships in that they are characterized by the professional/personal duality and are often constrained by time and location; that is, scientists often need to develop relationships in particular settings with specific individuals in a certain time period. As such, participant observers are reluctant to leave the development of research relationships to the vagaries of myriad factors that influence the development of such relationships, such as personalities and circumstances. Thus they try to manage, to the extent possible, the development of relationships by focusing on commonalities.

Consciously or not, commonalities frequently play a central role in the development of research and non-research relationships alike. Commonalities serve to reduce distance of all types between individuals in many kinds of relationships. Thus, in participant observation, scientists consciously establish commonalities in order to: make connections with participants and to assist in establishing “natural” relationships; reduce barriers and minimize differences; develop the research relationship through being accepted and trusted; and, achieve research goals through information sharing and shared understanding.

When entering unfamiliar settings, participant observers need to develop relationships with potential participants. According to my participants’ accounts, making connections with participants is a critical step in this process and one that relies heavily on establishing commonalities with participants. Whyte (1984) contends that the degree of difference between scientists and participants impacts scientists’ acceptance by participants. Participants may judge scientists on their personal characteristics, such as gender, and physical features, as well as on their appearance, and make assumptions that create distance (LeCompte et al., 1999). Further, scientists’ behavior and worldview may also affect how they present themselves, potentially impacting distance with participants. The amount of distance created between scientists and their participants may impact the willingness of participants to accept and trust scientists (Cottle, 1977) and, thus, facilitate or impede data collection. Distance impacts the development of trust and being accepted which, in turn, affects information sharing by participants and thus scientists’ ability to understand participants’ lives and perspectives.

Thus, lack of commonalities may present barriers to developing relationships between scientists and participants; establishing commonalities with participants helps to reduce barriers and minimize distance between scientists and their participants. As a

result, scientists often engage in 'impression management' in order to play down differences and to minimize distance with participants in areas that they can affect. For example, scientists may change their appearance or behavior. Following, I demonstrate the essential theme of participant observation relationships as built on commonalities as experienced by my participants.

In her study of families participating in a social service organization, Theresa had two primary groups of participants; professional service providers and families participating in the program. At the start of her study, she was working in a job similar to those of the service providers in her study. Their shared professional identity, including consistent priorities, values, and experiences, facilitated her ability to connect with them, to understand their jobs from their perspectives, and to understand what was important to them as well as the challenges. As a result, Theresa did not anticipate any problems with developing relationships with service providers. She did not have the same expectations, however, for her relationships with the families in her study as she recalls,

All these families who are just entrenched in poverty and who have really extreme situations, that there's a difference [between us]. So I was prepared to do what I needed to do to become their friend and the pleasant surprise for me was that I didn't have to do anything. We were just friends....It's like, "Oh, okay so, here she is and yeah, she has a lot in common with us" because there are a lot about my circumstances that, even though they were different, it made me closer to them rather than more removed. So the relationship was just very natural. It was not contrived as I, going into it...was prepared for it to be. That I might have to somehow not really be myself to get what I wanted to get and that was an understanding of their lives and that never happened. (3, pp. 20-21)

She describes the role of commonalities in her relationship with, Karen, the wife in her primary family,

I was a mother figure and Karen and I both had four kids and I think if I hadn't, that the relationship would have been all together different. Not that any of the parents ever met my kids but the fact that I had four kids and knew what it was like to parent and to parent multiple children helped us to relate....even though two of her kids didn't live there, the fact

that we both had four kids and both shared that mother piece I think helped to, helped us in our relationship, a mutual kind of understanding. (3, p. 19)

For Theresa, commonalities with her participants in both groups made her feel as though the relationships were not contrived, that she did not have to “fake” anything, in contrast to scientists’ experiences with employing impression management strategies.

Catherine recalls how, in her study of siblings in an after school program, she shared information about her childhood to encourage children to talk about their siblings, “Most of them were very forthcoming with information and a lot of times I would tell stories about my own childhood to get them talking about similar situations and I’d tell stories about what I did with my siblings and they would listen and be interested and curious” (3, p. 20). Catherine also described her relationship with the program director, a key participant in her study, in terms of shared interests. She explains that although they saw things very differently politically, and had very different approaches to working with kids, “I felt like his heart was in the same place my heart was and he really cared about these kids even if he would make fun of me for liking them so much....I think he was just teasing me and he loved the kids in his own way too but he was much more a “tough love” kind of guy” (2, p. 20).

Catherine argued that commonalities were not a key factor for her in developing relationships with the children in her study. Rather, she determined that her relationships hinged on her ability to establish connections with participants, and to facilitate levels of comfort between her and her participants. She explains,

When I think about my own experience, what my relationships with them meant to me was that you connect to people for completely unpredictable reasons and you can’t say you’re going to connect or somebody’s going to be more open with you or more honest with you because you match on particular demographic variables. That just doesn’t ring true based on my experience. I felt like what those relationships meant to me...was that I can connect to kids and I don’t know really why. I don’t know why those kids stood out to me or why we had connection and I don’t think there’s anything that I could pinpoint about it It’s just I felt comfortable with

them, they felt comfortable with me. There was humor. We got each other's humor somehow but it wasn't anything about my background or their background or anything. It was there was a connection there that probably couldn't be predicted. (3, pp. 9-10)

For Catherine, making connections and being comfortable were key factors in developing relationships with children. She also employed impression management strategies. Although she stated that she was "very much myself," she acknowledged deliberately bringing to the program everyday a pink messenger bag because the older kids liked it. She recalls that it helped her fit in a bit more, "Teen bopper girls liked the bag so I stuck with the bag" (3, p. 13).

Courtney, who studied home-school connections in a fifth grade classroom, recounted that her primary participant, Meg, the classroom teacher, made connections with her based on outward similarities. She explains, "Early on she recognized I was a recently divorced woman, a little younger but about the same age and she saw a number of similarities between us. It turned out that there were a lot of similarities. A lot of differences too but that was something that very early on she really made a connection with" (2, p. 3). She continues, "I think why she trusted me, even early on, was I look like her. I had a lot of the characteristics and similarities that I think she just immediately made a connection. Very superficial connection but then as I shared with her more of myself I think she also trusted me more" (3, p. 25).

Early on in their relationship, Meg shared a lot of information with Courtney about her abusive childhood. Courtney reciprocated by sharing similar information about her own childhood. She recollects,

I felt a need to respond in kind even though it's not necessarily like me to share so much. If someone asks me directly, sure I'll say something. But in general, I'm not someone who will start chatting and then start talking about the dysfunctional family that I grew up in. But I did feel that I needed to share some of my own life...I certainly didn't make anything up and there are some things that I didn't disclose, but I always wondered if I hadn't shared that about my life, if she would have felt as comfortable

being open in the long run. I wouldn't have made something up and said, "Oh, yeah, I'm dysfunctional too" just to get more info from her. (2, p. 7)

In this relationship, Courtney attributed her participant's trust in her with regard to sharing sensitive information to Courtney's sharing of similar childhood experiences. She continues, "If I never responded or implied that I'd had the best life ever I don't know that she would have felt that I could understand her and not just about personal things but understand her as a teacher, understand her as a person. So I did feel it necessary to share and not want her to feel as my friend recently said like, "How could one ever understand?" (3, p. 18). Even with the commonalities they shared, Courtney attributed the fact that her relationship with Meg, formed for research purposes, did not progress beyond that purpose primarily to fundamental differences between them. These included her perspective that Meg was conservative, closed-minded, racist, and homophobic.

In her study of families participating in a program for transitioning from welfare, Patricia described how having culture, language, and experiences in common made her relationship with several families feel "natural." Even so, she reported altering her speech and dress to adapt to each of the families she studied. Similar to Catherine's reasons for carrying her pink messenger bag, Patricia recounts being conscious of her appearance each time she visited families,

I was always dressed very casually for the most part. But you know when I would go and hang out with the kids, maybe because I'm short but I can project to be very young without my glasses...and I could do my hair in different ways so the kids were like, "Oh I like your hair"...or "Oh, I like your shoes." I was very conscious about wearing jeans and a tee shirt with them and I could pick up on what they thought was cool and what they thought was not cool. So I would go by that, play it by ear because that would also allow them to see me as younger and understand them more. So I was very conscious of doing all that kind of stuff. (2, pp. 19-20)

With all the families in her study, Patricia recalled being conscious of the way she spoke, the words she used and how she interacted with them. She chose to speak her native

language with some participants when she wanted to stress connections between them. She describes how she made decisions about sharing information about herself in terms of establishing commonality with participants so that they would come to trust her, “Being very selective about how much, about what to share and all really at the end of the day to create a better sense of comfort and to have them connect with me better and have them trust me better and in the end just to become a little bit more integrated” (3, p. 22).

Patricia observed that participants need to feel that scientists are not completely different from them; by sharing certain aspects of their lives, scientists can demonstrate similarity. For Patricia, establishing commonalities was critical in allowing her participants to feel comfortable with her coming into their lives and to share information with her. She describes the role of commonalities in one relationship in particular,

She was very ill but....she talked a lot about her home country....She would tell me, “You are like part of the family” and she would share everything with me....Details about the family stories that would make me laugh, and I would also give her some of my stories so she could also identify with me....there were certain things that I could relate with her...and so a lot of her worldview I sort of understood, culturally speaking. In many ways I think for me it overlapped with a lot of my family experiences....It was very easy for me to understand her perspective and I think she knew that and I think that that allowed her to open up with me quite a lot. Everything from her past to her personal struggles now to the fact that they were telling her she might die. Having those kinds of conversations, everything from making mistakes in the past, like an abortion....I think people don't just share these things automatically and I think she trusted me a tremendous amount. (2, p. 15)

Thus, for Patricia, commonalities with some participants led to a feeling that these relationships were natural, not forced or contrived, even though she explicitly worked to make those commonalities known, and to establish connections.

With one participant, Patricia recalled that the distance between them resulted in a certain amount of distrust on the woman's part. She attributed this distance primarily to their different races. She comments more broadly on how differences in factors, such as race and class, can affect the development of scientist-participant relationships,

Especially in certain situations, certain contexts where race really matters, for instance or class, I just don't see how someone can become a true participant observer and become integrated into that family. I mean I think it can exist but you have to really cross that bridge, cultural or social class divide that exists between you and that person. I think you have to be conscious of it. They're obviously very conscious of it and you just have to find ways to make both people comfortable. I think it can happen but I think it can take a lot of work to get there. But once you're able to achieve that and you're able to, again, become part of their world for the time being, I think you can get tons of information that you really need. (3, pp. 12-13)

Patricia explained that she made connections with this woman through her children. She spent quite a lot of time with the children and talked to them about school and their lives. Then, as a mother, the woman would talk to Patricia about her children. Further, to minimize any distance created by Patricia's status as a college student, Patricia made sure that this woman knew that Patricia came from a working class background and grew up in a mixed race, urban neighborhood. This way, her participant knew that Patricia "wasn't coming from a completely different world than she was" (2, p. 13). Patricia ascertained that this shared aspect of their backgrounds helped the woman open up and share information with her: still, Patricia felt that this woman did not completely trust her.

For Bridget, lack of commonality between scientist and participant is a potential barrier to building relationships in participant observation, and ultimately threatens the success of the research. She explains,

It's maybe not part of defining participant observation but it's something about defining success, I think you have to be something like the people you're studying. So if participant observation is about learning the world of the people that you're observing, you're sort of trying to understand their experience, then you need to have at least some kind of basic ability to become potentially one of them I think....Maybe what's more important is that the people have to be able somehow to feel some relation to the observer, some kind of potential relationship, that they see you as like them somehow. (3, pp. 9-10)

In her study of work in a health and safety organization, Bridget explained that usually she did not tell people that she was not American because she did not want to

alienate people or create distinctions with her participants. At one point, one participant commented that it bothered him that there were so many foreign students at American universities and she just quietly agreed. In the same way, she recalls wanting to minimize differences between her and a specific group of her participants created by her status as a doctoral student so that they could relate to her,

These are people who are high school or associate's degrees and they have these really lovely thick Northtown accents.... maybe working class is the best way I can describe it....There was this sense of, "You're a Ph.D. student"...."You guys work hard and you do interesting stuff and you're going on and teach at these good universities and do these interesting things and that's really cool" and...this sense of some sort of respect....For most of them, what I liked is they got past that. I was like, "Whatever. That's nice but not me. Maybe some of the people in the science labs but they don't give Nobel prizes in sociology so you don't have to worry about me" (laughs). So there was also this need to show these people that I'm salt of the earth too and I'm not here to take notes and then say, "Well, yes, right," looking down my nose and inspecting....It was just me saying, "Can I come follow you?" "You can follow me. I don't do anything interesting." "I think it's interesting." "Why?" "Because I study work and I think work is interesting and I want to know what you do." "Whatever. Come along." (3, p. 15)

In her study, Bridget managed to overcome this initial hurdle with this specific group of participants by establishing commonalities, and showing interest and an eagerness to learn from them.

Bridget's experiences also included employing impression management strategies in the form of having to let some of her personality "melt away" at times in order to minimize differences with participants. She recalls one particular situation,

It was the damndest thing in the end...a really wonderful man always wanted to argue with me about health care in North Land. I don't care. I don't want to talk about national health care. Not in this country. I just don't want to. I don't bring it up but he always wanted to talk about it... "What about that socialist medical care you have in North Land? I think people don't get proper medical care in that socialist system." I was like, "Well, that's not my experience." I tried to get away, just say, "It's not my experience but I think the media distorts it....There's many ways to do these things"....but this guy kept wanting to talk about North Land and about politics and medical care over and over and over again....It turns out this poor, poor man had a very serious cancer...and he survived...and he went back to work. He probably got extremely good medical care and

it meant a lot to him. It was important to him. He's alive. But he just wanted to talk about it. (2, p. 17)

She explains her reasoning for altering her normal behavior in this situation,

Like everyone else, I have an opinion on this and it's a hot topic and I could sit there for 20 minutes with this guy and tell him what I think and why I think it and why I think he should think again and that's kind of how I am in some situations.....he really wanted to get into it. He was pushing me and I didn't want to do that and so I had to say, "Okay, Bridget, not here, not now. It's not worth it. It's not interesting." Furthermore, it just didn't make sense that he wanted to get into this fight with me because he's one of these wonderful guys who took me around all these places and he's absolutely the sweetest, softest man and it was such a disconnect. So at that moment I was like, this was sort of the melting like, "Don't flip into your normal mode where you go into your 20 minute lecture where you go on about whatever"....there was something wrong there and I knew I had to chill out and figure out what was happening. I honestly didn't figure it out. I think I got a hint of it later in the summer but I think it wasn't until September or October but I found out that he had had cancer. (3, p. 22)

In an attempt to find out what was driving this participants' unusual behavior yet maintain her relationship with him, Bridget altered her behavior to minimize differences in their perspectives about socialized medicine.

In her study of welfare families in urban public housing projects, Silvia described two primary strategies for establishing relationships. One was to reduce barriers that participants might erect, primarily due to differences in education levels. She explains, "I don't ever make it known that I know anything for them. I mean they know that I have some expertise in something that I'm doing obviously, but I always ask them if I'm thinking of this correctly, if I'm putting this correctly. I sometimes mess up on purpose in a sense just to get them to clarify" (3, p. 8). The other strategy was to make connections with her potential participants by sharing aspects of her life that they had in common, "I think the fact that I'm also an immigrant and explaining aspects of my immigration, I mean all these issues are in commonality. I went through my divorce and they could all identify exactly what all of that was about. That made me as normal and as average as anybody else" (3, pp. 8-9). Silvia made connections with participants by

sharing information about herself that showed how alike they were. This included that she was a single parent, had been on food stamps, and had participated in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). By focusing on commonalities, Silvia's participants could relate to her as "just another woman trying to get ahead with a child," something with which they were all familiar. She explains the importance of this strategy,

The reason I say that's where race and ethnicity come into the picture is because the more in commonality you have with the people you're researching, the more access...the more ability you have to maintain it as an informal relationship and the more that the instrumentality of it all can be left out. If...you can't identify with their experience or they can't identify with your experience, then all of that buffer is gone and I don't think you can be an effective researcher. So I tend to think that if you have similar backgrounds, ethnic and language and cultural backgrounds, that helps an awful lot....It...really is all about having enough material that unites you two that you can do your work properly so it's like building that buffer....To have the conversations so that you know in all these areas I'm just like you and so it's the similarities and the commonalities. (3, p. 9)

She describes the role of commonalities in her relationship with a key participant who was a professional in the setting,

She was a really, really, really, really, excellent, excellent woman. We developed a really good relationship because she understood early from me that I was very critical of social workers. I mean I've been a social worker, but I was very critical of them because I saw certain shortcomings that were institutionally based. She was really happy when we talked because she had that same experience and so we connected on a number of levels that have to do with really what you should do as a social service provider. That's where my background from theology of liberation comes from and with her, I could talk about and she was really excited to know somebody who came from an intellectual place but who could talk about these things at a practical level. (2, p. 16)

Silvia attributed her ability to develop a long term relationship with this woman to the fact that she could participate with her in her understanding. She explains, "I had language to attach to what she was doing and she liked that. We could talk about this" (3, p. 6). This relationship demonstrates, for Silvia, the rewards of commonalities and their role as a basis for building the relationship and shared understanding.

The excerpts in this section illustrate the essential theme of participant observation relationships as built on commonalities. Commonalities as foundational in participant observation relationships is evidenced through the roles that they play in making connections and developing relationships that feel natural; reducing barriers and minimizing distance between scientists and participants; and in facilitating trust, acceptance, information sharing, and shared understanding. Due to the unique circumstances in which relationships are formed in this research activity, scientists need to be proactive in initiating and developing relationships with participants, and thus understand the role of commonalities to ensure success.

Trustful

In participant observation, trust is needed in terms of relationships with individual participants, in the setting, and in role presentation. Trust plays a central role in participants' willingness to share information with scientists, and impacts the amount and type of information participants are willing to share. Trust is also needed for successful integration into participants' lives. Trust is connected to participants' vulnerability and the corresponding need for participants to trust that scientists will not harm them. In delineating the essential theme of participant observation relationships as trustful, I utilize trustful to connote relationships characterized by trust.

According to Baier (1986), trust is a three-term relation where A trusts B with a valued thing C. Very rarely is trust wholesale: we trust others to do, or be, or care for certain things. Thus, trust of another is with respect to some thing. In participant observation relationships, scientists have to identify those things with which they want participants to trust them, and develop trust with participants with respect to those things. For example, scientists, as well as wanting participants to trust them with private information, may want participants to trust them with their children, such as taking out them out for pizza.

I draw on two of my participant's explanations to frame my use of trust in this section. In the context of her participant observation experience in studying home-school connections in a fifth grade classroom, one of my participants, Courtney, described trust in her relationship with her key participant as, "She believed that things wouldn't be used against her, that we'd have her best interests in mind" (3, p. 26). When I asked Judi what she meant by trust in her study of collaborative inquiry in an independent network of educators, she responded, "If you're taking people's stories, taking other people's words and descriptions of other people's words and putting them in print, there's an obligation there that involves a lot of ethical ways of relating to other people" (3, p. 22). In the Courtney's excerpt, trust relates to the participant's expectations of the scientists in terms of treatment by them; that they will treat her fairly and will not cause her harm. Similarly, in Judi's excerpt, trust refers to the scientists' treatment of participants in terms of how scientists portray them, how they summarize their words, and what scientists say about them as people through those portrayals. Drawing from these two contextualized definitions, I frame the essential theme of participant observation as trustful in terms of trust concerning the feeling, and subsequent actions that convey that trust, that participants have that scientists will not cause them harm.

Scientists' relationships with participants formed during studies take on many forms depending on a variety of factors, including types of settings, scientists' length of time in settings, initial status in settings, roles, and personal characteristics, situational factors, and responses by participants. As noted previously, participant observation relationships are different from many nonresearch relationships in that they are often constrained by factors, such as time and location. Just as scientists consciously try to manage the development of relationships by focusing on commonalities, simultaneously

they try to earn the trust of participants and others in settings by acting in ways that demonstrate their trustworthiness.

Trust is an attribute of a relationship that develops over time based on the actions of the actors and the absence of knowledge that erodes it. Participants' trust in scientists may be impacted by historical factors and factors beyond scientists' control, such as gender and race. Baier (1986) explains, "Trust of any particular form is made more likely, in adults, if there is a climate of trust of that sort. Awareness of what is customary, as well as past experience of one's own, affects one's ability to trust" (p. 245). As described in the previous theme, the presence or absence of commonalities may also impact levels of trust. In research relationships, trust is an extremely important factor because it helps to determine whether participants will develop relationships with scientists to the extent that they share information about their lives and allow scientists to participate in their lives. Thus, scientists need to develop trusting relationships to realize their research goals.

When individuals participate in research studies, particularly participant observation, they expose themselves in a variety of ways. These include: sharing information of a private or sensitive nature; opening themselves up to the scientists' judgment; and, establishing sometimes intimate but often temporary relationships. Such exposure makes participants vulnerable, particularly when they do not realize the extent of their exposure. In order for participants to open up to scientists and share their lives, they need to have a certain level of trust that scientists will not cause them harm. Thus, scientists need to establish a level of trust early in relationships, and need to act in ways that build trust in those areas so that participants feel comfortable giving scientists access to more areas of their lives and share more information with them.

Trust is also a factor in scientists' integration into settings; successful integration is a critical component of participant observation relationships. In order to participate

in settings and experience participants' lives, participant observers need to be accepted by participants and others in settings. Integration involves becoming part of the daily activities of settings and participants' lives to the extent that participants see scientists as part of the setting, and trust them enough to share information with them. Accordingly, trust is an important factor in research relationships because it helps to determine whether participants will accept scientists and develop relationships with them such that they share information about their lives and allow scientists to participate in their lives. The following excerpts from my participants' accounts of their experiences illustrate these different aspects of the essential theme of participant observation relationships as trustful.

In her account of her study of families participating in a program for transitioning from welfare, Patricia described different things for which she managed to develop trust with participants. She recounted a situation where she found herself faced with a decision involving trust that would impact her relationships with one participant and others in a setting. On leaving her home to visit this participant, her car window would not close. Patricia commented that although she did not have an expensive car, she was concerned about its safety in the neighborhood she was visiting. Once at her participant's house, she kept looking out of the window to check on her car. When her participant asked her what she was doing, Patricia explained the situation. She recalls what followed,

She's like, "Oh girl, you better be careful because these guys here they steal everything." I'm like, "Great." So then she kept peeking for my car and so she described some of the guys in the neighborhood which is an excellent way to get to know the culture of the neighborhood and what was going on....an hour and half or so [goes by]...and she calls her friend, this guy next door [who] actually was part of that same group that she was talking about (laughter). She tells him that my car door window is stuck and that if he could fix it. At this point I'm like "I don't know if I should trust this guy" because basically he comes over and he asks me for my keys (laughter). It's early on in my interview process and I'm like "I don't know if I should give him my keys." So I'm like "Why don't I just go

outside with you?" and so I was a bit apprehensive....this young guy, he goes in there and he takes my car door apart (clicks her fingers) in seconds (laughter) and he fixes my window and he puts it back and he actually turned out to be a really nice guy. I saw him several times after that. He became her boyfriend (laughs). So that happened once with my car window and he fixed it....then it happened again and so the second time I gave him my keys and I actually just took off. (2, pp. 8-9)

In making her decision to give the young man her car keys the second time and leave, Patricia recalls, "I felt like I had to like show that I trusted them just as much as they trusted me so it was a way that I think, like I sent the message that like, "I'm relaxed and look, I trust you guys"" (2, p. 9). She noted that this action resulted in a more open exchange of information with her participant. Yet, Patricia felt a lack of trust in her by this participant: she attributes part of this to the entire family's outlook,

The family was very apprehensive about outsiders. Actually the people that she trusted were probably her mom... and her really, really close family members. Other than that they had a jaded view on people and just didn't trust very many people, just in general. Obviously this came out over time and with the lady herself and with the kids because they were developing sort of the same views. In the end I kind of understood them and I understood where they were coming from but I had to sort of expose myself and let her know that she could trust me. (2, pp. 7-8)

This impacted their relationship, as Patricia recalls, "I always felt that it was just at a time when she felt that I was making too many visits or maybe she created a little bit of distance and so I always felt coming from her that she'd give me some but then she'd hold back and just not completely trust me, not one hundred percent so maybe to the point when she thought she was getting too close she would pull back" (2, p. 7). Patricia also noted that she was not accepted fully in this participant's neighborhood; when neighbors visited while she was there, they would look at her "skeptically" and sometimes ignore her. Thus, in her relationship with this particular participant, the participant's lack of trust in Patricia with respect to sharing certain aspects of her life impacted Patricia's acceptance by others in the participant's life.

In contrast, Patricia described close and trusting relationships with other families. With one family, she explains, "It was like I was a family member and so it was very, very different....they really took me in as a family member in many ways. At first, maybe they were a bit apprehensive like normal people would be but in the end...they wanted me to be part of their family" (2, p. 14). She describes trust in terms of relationships with participants in her study,

In this particular study, I think I could have been exposed to a lot of illegal stuff. For example, the fact that one of the ladies was selling stolen goods. I think they need to trust you in the sense that you're not going to go and rat on them (laughs) or if you see anything...you're not going to rat on the neighbors. They're going to trust you at that level and so I think that's very important. I think that's probably the most important thing that I felt. And at the same time they share with you some very personal things and that you'll be sensitive and understanding as much as you can and that you'll be respectful. I think that's important. I think that when people feel they can trust you, they'll open up, trusting that you will respect their worldviews, even though it might be very different from yours or their experiences. (3, pp. 15-16)

Patricia determined that building trusting relationships with participants was based in part on her respectful treatment of participants, particularly in terms of keeping information confidential and being sensitive to the personal nature of some information. Her experiences illustrate a variety of factors that influence scientists' ability to develop trustful relationships with participants and how trusts impact information sharing.

Theresa described trust in research relationships in several contexts in her study of families participating in a social service organization. One context was building trust for her role as a researcher in the setting. In Chapter 4, I used Theresa's account of the process of her integration into one part of her setting. Her strategy of integration involved being a constant presence in the setting and demonstrating her trustworthiness so that participants accepted her and developed relationships with her, with the desired result of information sharing. She recalls, "We took care of that consent process in September so that by the time we really got into the study, they'd be much more relaxed

around me which I think is key to doing any participant observation study. That length of time in the field is critical so that you develop that trust and everybody feels okay around you” (2, p. 23). She did face challenges, however, in the setting. She described how she did not go to a participant’s house for a long time because the participant’s boyfriend did not trust her and did not want Theresa “hanging around.” Once he went to jail, however, she was able to establish a relationship with the participant.

Participants evidenced their trust in Theresa with their information, even though, she ascertained, they did not always understand the extent to which they were being observed. She explains, “They always knew that I was there to investigate, sort of collect information and they would slip me things, they would explain things to me often times. I mean there was a lot of stuff that I was paying attention to that they probably didn’t realize that I was paying attention to, really making special note of, but they also went out of their way to tell me things that they thought that I might want to know” (2, pp. 14-15). For these participants, developing trust in Theresa was integral to their sharing more personal information with her and letting her into their lives. She describes the role of trust with regard to information sharing by one participant who was a service provider, “I was a safe place for her to try to make sense of her own job and that was very comfortable and I think very safe for her. So I would say we had a very close relationship in as much as I think she felt she could say anything she wanted with me and I found her interesting” (2, p. 12).

Participant observers also have to build trust with participants and in settings for the different roles that they take on and are assigned. Theresa described how, once she had assumed a parent role, if she went back to talk with the service providers, she had to be careful that parents did not see her because she did not want families to think she was a staff member and thus to damage all the trust that she had built up with them over the months of participating as a parent in the program. She describes the trust she had with

her participants, “They trusted me. They knew that it was okay. They knew that I wasn’t going to turn around and tell the program and they also knew that I was genuinely interested and cared about their lives” (2, p. 23).

In a different context, Theresa describes how she needed to maintain her relationships with participants after she had left the setting, so that she could ask them to review her findings,

Then I got to the point toward the end of the study where I...basically had it written up and I needed to check it. I think the checking process was important to still maintain my relationships with people so that we still had trust and they could tell me, “No Theresa, you don’t get it. That’s not right. It’s this way.” So we still had to have that comfort level which meant I needed to maintain the relationships while I was writing and have them still be able to tell me whether or not I got it right. (2, p. 10)

Theresa’s account illustrates the role of trust in different contexts within relationships: to facilitate information sharing, to participate in others’ lives, and to shape an environment for forthrightness.

Arising from her experiences in several research projects, Courtney considers all research participants to be vulnerable. She explains, “I think that by opening oneself, one’s space up to another one needs to be vulnerable enough to trust someone so at the very basic level, by agreeing to participate [a participant] is vulnerable” (3, p. 24). She describes the ways in which her key participant in her study of home-school connections in a fifth grade classroom was vulnerable,

She didn’t know us and even if she did, even good friends who engage in research together, problems still arise so she needed to trust us and she didn’t really even have a foundation to trust us because there was no history. So I think that right there she made herself vulnerable. I think she made herself vulnerable to us because...there was no clear cut boundary on what was research and what wasn’t in our conversations. She would bracket some things but just the fact that she brought them up indicated that there were shifting boundaries. Also with the relationships, there were shifting boundaries and she was unclear about what was research and what wasn’t because she felt the need to say, “This is off limits”....She also didn’t know what we would do with the data, what conversations we were having about her with the data. She sometimes questioned, “Did you talk about this lousy lesson? Were you laughing

about this?" She didn't know...the conversations that [were] going on let alone the idea that we might publish so I think all of this made her very vulnerable to us. (3, pp. 24-25)

Courtney attributed, in part, the emergent nature of participant observation and the professional/personal nature of research relationships to creating an environment in which her key participant was vulnerable in the context of the study. Her experience demonstrates how participants' vulnerability in relationships creates the need for them to trust that scientists will not cause them harm.

To further complicate the situation, Courtney was conducting a pilot study involving this participant within the context of the larger study. Courtney recalls that this participant had been betrayed by others in her life and, as a result, Courtney had to work at building and maintaining trust with this key participant, who also saw Courtney as a friend,

I think when we were out, we were friends. When we were in the school or at a meeting, I was a researcher but friendly still. But I think it was a concern of hers, she had been betrayed by people in the past....If you want to believe that you can trust people and you don't want to lose hope, you have to provide them with something, test them somehow but I think with me more than anybody, I think the lines were blurred. But I do think she saw me as both a researcher and as a friend and...she'd say, "This is in confidence." So I mean she was aware of my relationships with other people though but I would also initiate questions. I would say, "Is this in confidence?" or if she forgot to tell me something, I'd also say, "That's okay. I just as soon do it in confidence" because if the topic wasn't directly related to the larger research and of a sensitive issue, I would prefer to err on the side of protecting her than not and so I would let her know that. But I think that no matter how close she felt to me as a friend, she would never forget that I was a researcher. (2, p. 21)

Courtney described this participant as "just a trusting person even though there are people she doesn't trust"; that "her general inclination is to trust" (3, p. 25). As recounted earlier, Courtney attributed this participant placing her trust in her to their similarity in appearances; her participant made a connection with Courtney because they looked alike. Then, as Courtney shared more of herself and strengthened those connections, her participant placed more trust in her.

The topic of Kate's study – strippers and strip club audiences – was sensitive in that strippers and those who go to strip clubs and watch them are viewed by some people as engaging in deviant, socially unacceptable, or embarrassing behavior. Kate described going to a strip club for some people as being “private in nature in terms of being this kind of leisure activity that they don't tell people about” (2, p. 22). This was evident in the case of one of her participants,

There was one guy who said, when I went to interview him, “I don't go to strip clubs”But he had been there and then he talked about it once I turned the tape off but he didn't say, “Don't use this. This is off the record.” He just didn't want it recorded anywhere that he went to strip clubs, I guess. He said, “I don't really go. I was just going because my friends were going.” So I guess he meant he doesn't initiate the trip. He didn't say that he didn't like it but he didn't want to own that behavior. (2, p. 23)

Due to the private nature of this activity, participants were vulnerable when Kate accompanied them to the strip club in terms of her judging them for their actions. She explains,

After I went with them the first time they didn't talk about not wanting to go with me again. I think they realized that I wasn't going to do things they were used to hearing from women in their life about it being a horrible place and why do you go there and degrading them for what they were doing since I was going to observe and see what was going on, being objective as possible. I said none of those things. I just asked them questions about what was happening. (2, pp. 2-3)

Once her participants saw that Kate was not going to judge them for their behavior, they trusted her to talk about it with her present and to take her there with them again.

Kate faced a situation in her study of that reaffirms the notion of participants' vulnerability, and their need to trust scientists not to cause them harm. A potential breach of confidentiality threatened to expose the identities of her audience member participants to others at the university she attended. Kate managed to avert the situation by not going back to the strip club and by changing the design of her study. She explains

that she felt responsible for protecting the audience member participants in terms of her study,

I felt a responsibility to protect, as far as I was able to, obviously I can't keep people from going to a strip club, but protect the guys that I was going there with, who I had asked to be in my study. I mean I didn't ask any of the guys to go. Tom was the only one that I would ask. I'd be like, "Can we go to the strip club this weekend? (Laughs) I want to go out there again. I need to go there more." I would ask that but more ask, "Are you guys going?" So I never asked any of the guys to go except to find out from Tom when he was going to go and make sure I was included. So they went of their own accord but still I was studying them and if other people came because of me I felt like it would be my fault if they saw people they didn't want to see and that wasn't fair to them. (3, p. 21)

With regard to establishing trust with the participants in her study, Kate explained that by having an existing friend (Tom) as a key participant, she got to "skip that step of gaining the trust from the inside because I already had trust there" (2, p. 15). She explains, "They [the strip club audience members] were going to trust me by default because they already knew that [Tom] trusted me and he had already known me for a while" (2, p. 15). Her existing friendship with Tom provided Kate sponsorship to join the group. It also meant that, after an initial outing to the strip club with the audience members where they could assess her behavior, she did not have to invest a lot of time building trust with relative strangers. Kate described trust in the context of her study as "willingness to share what the person thinks or feels" (3, p. 19). Kate's participants trusted her to not expose their activities, or to judge them.

Kate's relationship with her stripper participant, however, differed from her relationships with her audience members. For a variety of reasons, Kate did not reveal her research role to her stripper participant, Jasmine. She recalls how her relationship with Jasmine impacted the information that the stripper shared with her,

The situation with Jasmine, it was still a customer context. She was performing this role and which by performing it she gets money so when I ask her a question about the club...it would make sense for her to answer in such a way...that I would want to be there and give her money. Everything about that relationship is built on the fact that here's a

stripper who's having a relationship with clients because of the money that they're getting. As I mentioned previously, Tom liked to give Jasmine five dollars at a time so maybe he was even paying for my time to talk to her in a way. She didn't know me enough or trust me enough I guess to know that if she told me things that were outside of that sales relationship or might seem to lessen the sales relationship so that she wouldn't make so many sales, wouldn't actually have caused that to occur. She wouldn't know that so I couldn't necessarily get all the inside scoop because I did ask her why she was stripping and her answer was to get money for her children but really? Money for drugs maybe? I mean it could be anything but money for children, that's a good reason to want to give someone money. To help take care of their children. Money to shoot heroin. That seems as though it's not the same kind of story. It's not going to give the same sales relationship but then if there was a different kind of trust relationship there, she might have been able to tell me...why she is doing it. (3, p. 19)

For Kate, the lack of trust in her relationship with Jasmine impacted the information that Jasmine shared, particularly in terms of Kate not knowing its veracity. This situation is contrasted by the trust evidenced in her by her audience member participants, and their willingness to provide candid information about their experiences. Thus, in Kate's experience, trust and sharing are inextricably intertwined.

In her study of an independent network of educators of which she had been a member for over twenty years, Judi described having to build trust with key individuals and in the setting for her research role. One of those individuals was the person who had founded the network. She explains,

One of the things I had to do was to also build trust with Barbara because I was documenting work that she had started....initially for the first ten years, she determined the readings, she determined the content, she would lecture, she would meet with us individually as an advisor and facilitated this whole thing. Suddenly, someone else within this group now, who's she trained, is coming and saying, "I would like to document that." That involved trust on her part, I think, that I could get it in a way that was ethical and would do it right. (2, p. 3)

She continues,

And...to build trust with Barbara that intellectually that I could handle the material of a doctoral dissertation and that she believed I could do it so she held me out to that to me. Her trust in my ability was part of it and then...because I had chaired and documented and we had worked together in sessions enough so that she trusted me to be able to portray

her remarks or what she said in ways that she felt were true for her because she could...I think as a gatekeeper for this study, have said no. She didn't so I feel honored by that actually because I have such respect for her as an intellect and as a person. So she could have just said, "No, I don't really think that we could do this" but she didn't. So trust is really large. (3, p. 22)

Judi had to build trust with Barbara in terms of her capabilities of conducting a doctoral research study, and that she would conduct the work in an ethical manner.

With others in the setting, Judi explained that she had to make people feel relaxed around her in her new role, and to prove that she was trustworthy in that role. She had to build trust with these educators with whom she was well acquainted but some of whom did not really understand her role and some of whom resisted her role for a variety of reasons. For example, she describes how one, whom Judi perceived as liking power and control, responded to her research, "[She] felt that she needed to come and caution me about how I was going to portray this group and her assumptions about who I was as some kind of new-ager and that I would depict this group as a bunch of groupies. I was taken aback and amused" (2, p. 8). Judi perceived that her research threatened this woman. Judi's situation illustrates that even though people might be trustworthy in a setting, taking on a new role, particularly one that is not well understood, does not mean that they will be automatically trusted in that new role.

Although Judi was a long-term participant in her setting, circumstances have prevented her return. She notes,

I haven't yet reentered as just another regular participant....When I structured my research I wanted to structure it in a way that would keep the integrity of my relationship with people so that I could reenter comfortably so that's again, picking and choosing where to put the weight of your description so that you're not left an outsider because that's still my community of people. (3, p. 3)

In her situation, Judi considered it important for her to design and conduct her study so that she could reenter the setting without any problems; that she did not damage the

trust or negatively impact relationships she had established over her years of involvement in the setting prior to the research.

These excerpts from my participants' accounts of their experiences illustrate the different contexts in which trust is needed in terms of relationships with individual participants, in the setting, and in role presentation. They show the integral role that trust plays in participants' willingness to share information with scientists, as well as its impact upon the amount and type of information shared. Further, the excerpts demonstrate the connection between trust and integration into participants' lives, and different aspects of participants' vulnerability and the corresponding need for participants to trust that scientists will not cause them harm. These excerpts demonstrate that trust is rarely, if ever, wholesale, and that scientists need to cultivate trust with participants with respect to a number of different things. These include candor, accurate representations of their actions and words, competencies of the scientists, and participants' interests foremost. In short, "to trust that scientists will not cause them harm" encompasses lots of quite varied, particular trusts.

Respectful

In research relationships, the objects of study - participants - are intellectual, physical, and emotional beings. Participant observation relationships as characterized by respect involve scientists' appreciating participants' humanness, not only in terms of respecting them as intellectual, physical, and emotional beings and not using them solely as means to an end, but also fulfilling obligations to participants arising from being in relationship with them. Respecting participants also involves respecting their privacy: this encompasses observing boundaries they set, not using private or non-study-related information about them, and keeping their identity as participants confidential. Another aspect of participant observation relationships as respectful is scientists' respect for the setting, including participants' roles in the setting and non-participants who are present.

In participant observation, scientists develop relationships with individuals in settings in order to fulfill their research goals - to gain participants' perspectives and to understand meaning in the setting. From this viewpoint, participants and the relationships formed with them are, at least initially, a means to an end. Accordingly, in participant observation, there is a danger that scientists may view their participants primarily as sources of data, forgetting the personal aspects of the relationship as well as attendant obligations of interacting with humans, particularly in dual purpose (professional and personal) relationships.

This behavior is exemplified by Ellis (1995), who writes of her experiences in returning to the site of prior research where she acknowledges that she "may have insensitively appropriated residents' lives "in the name of science" to advance my career" (p. 69). She admits to misrepresenting her research purpose while in her community of "Fishneck": that after a while, participants forgot her research role, in part due to her notion that it was best for Fishnecker's not be constantly reminded of it for fear that they may not then be as forthcoming as she needed them to be for her research purposes. In writing up her research, she reflects that she omitted details that reflected badly on her, such as pretending to maintain distance while collecting data, sidestepping details of her private life while encouraging participants to share theirs, listening in on conversations that they thought she wasn't listening to, and recording their conversations, unbeknownst to them. Such behavior demonstrates a lack of respect toward participants, including treating them solely as means to an end and not ends in themselves, not respecting their privacy, and not according them the respect that their humanity demands. Further, this type of behavior may also result in disrespect for, or negatively impact others in, the setting, such as perpetuating negative stereotypes.

As described in the previous chapter, participant observation is a corporeal activity; scientists are engaged physically, emotionally, and intellectually in their

research. But it is not just scientists who are engaged in the study in this manner; participants are too, and part of respecting participants is respecting these aspects of their humanness. Respecting participants' intellectual selves means recognizing that they are the experts on the matter at hand, and the value of their knowledge, including regarding what they have to say and how they say it as important: respecting participants' physical selves involves acknowledging physical limits on participation, including when people are too tired to be interviewed.

Another respectful aspect of participant observation relationships arises from recognizing participants as autonomous individuals, not merely sources of data, the relationships as ends in themselves, and the attendant obligations that arise from being in relationship with others. One of my participants, Judi, describes the obligations when interacting with people,

It's sort of that old base of good manners, that human interchange that you don't betray people, that you don't put them down, that you're not sarcastic, that you don't use people for your own ends and that you're authentically interested in what they have to say and in them seems to me just a way of being in the world that's really important to me and probably has to do with a set of values, I guess. A valuing of people and that that's enacted in the manner in which you relate to them. (3, pp. 8-9)

Such respect encompasses a variety of activities, including the nature of scientists' interactions with others and their behavior in settings, as well as their treatment of participants in publications that arise from their research.

When scientists embark on participant observation, they do so in settings. While in some settings, everyone might be participating in the study, in others, everyone will not. Respecting settings includes respecting participants and non-participants alike. Showing respect for settings involves scientists participating as much as possible without disrupting the setting in terms of "stealing the show," or altering the focus from what normally happens by being there in a manner such that people cannot do what they want to in the setting. In respecting participants in their settings, scientists need to

acknowledge that participants' lives go on irrespective of scientists' presence and research agendas, particularly in terms of responsibilities, both professional and personal. Following, I demonstrate participant observation as respectful as experienced by my participants.

In her study of families participating in a program for transitioning from welfare, Patricia described several aspects of respectful relationships with participants. One aspect was respecting participants' intellect in terms of their worldviews. She explains,

I think that when people feel they can trust you, they'll open up, trusting that you will respect their worldviews, even though it might be very different from yours or their experiences. When people open up to such a degree that they're vulnerable for you to judge them...for a participant observer, I think it's incredibly important for you to put all that aside. Of course we all have our own views on things and to be able to put our own judgments aside. For them to open up they have to trust you and feel like you're not going to judge them, no matter what it is. You're there to learn from them and you're there to hear what they have to say and try to understand why they behave the way they do and I think that's very important to get probably as much information and perhaps a more complete version of what it is that they're going through, what their lives are like. (3, p. 15)

In Patricia's experience, respecting participants' intellect requires recognizing that participants are the experts on the topic of interest; scientists value participants for their knowledge.

Another aspect Patricia recalled was respecting participants' privacy. One participant in her study made it clear to Patricia that she participated in the study in order to collect the money offered. This participant was willing to provide information but Patricia knew that she had to respect the distance that the woman created. She explains, "There was always a degree of distance but not to the point where I was unable to get the information that I needed. She was always very open and willing to have the conversation go in a number of ways but I always knew that I had to respect that distance" (2, p. 6).

Another aspect, respecting participants' humanness, occasionally presented dilemmas for Patricia. For example, Patricia saw her purpose of the study and her role as a researcher conflicting with her personal sense of obligation to her female adolescent participants to provide them with resources for college: she wanted to help the young girls, yet the purpose of the study was to understand their lives and to document that they did not have access to this kind of information.

Like Patricia, Jane described being conscious of respecting her participants' intellect in her study of the role of creativity in a Montessori school. In interacting with teachers, she respected teachers' knowledge of Montessori and acted "as a student of Montessori" in that she was not an expert and wanted to learn from them. With regard to the children in her study, Jane describes respecting what they had to say,

It was at one level a privilege and I looked at my work as being a privilege, to be able to enter the world of those children just for that brief amount of time and just see with their eyes. Like I said in a previous interview, I spent 95% of my time sitting on the floor (laughs) so I came to research a lot of what I observed basically sitting three feet or whatever from the floor because so of much what Montessori work is at the child's level and it's just comfortable for the child to work on a rug or work on the floor although there were smaller tables for like artwork....but then...you were like balancing yourself (laughs) on a little chair, listening to these little four year olds talk about something and to respect what they're saying because I was privy to conversations, and I respect this, that we think, "Oh four year olds. What do they talk about? They don't talk about anything important. It's just gibberish. It's just little kids, you know" and I would hear children talking about things like this. "Well, I'm really worried" in children's language, "I'm really worried that you're not drawing the picture the correct way." "Well, what do you mean?" "Well, my sister doesn't look that way." (3, pp. 9-10)

Jane also described respecting her participants in terms of recognizing their physical limits: she avoided engaging in research activities with teachers at the end of the day because they were exhausted, wanted to finish their work, and go home. She described why she was very conscious of being respectful of participants,

It's the access. I think that all researchers owe that no matter whether they're participant observers or not because I think I have a real respect for the field of research that I think that, and maybe it's getting better,

that there's a lot of, "I'm going to get my [data]" and not a respect for subjects or in...the qualitative world, participants. So anyway, there's a lot of wonderful academic work that's out there being done and I want to make sure for my two cents worth, that I am always respectful of my participants. (3, p. 13)

Resulting from her experience, Jane observed that participant observers need to be "respectful initiators" in settings. She explains, "Maybe find that respectful space or that comfortable space for yourself to go in and maybe push a little and say, "Can I do something here?" (3, p. 17). She continues, "You're not going to learn a whole lot about the culture if you sit on the edges of it" (3, p. 17). Thus for Jane, being a respectful initiator involves scientists making themselves experience the setting but within the bounds of what is appropriate for the setting, and being respectful of the setting and the people in it.

Catherine attributed some of the trust placed in her by the program director to having worked at the program for a while: the program director knew her, saw that she was good with kids, reliable and she treated people "with respect." She describes how she approached her relationships with children in her study,

I'm of the general philosophy that kids are human beings and need to be respected. I don't like to go in and say, "I'm an adult, kids must respect me." You earn their respect and then eventually they'll respect you because you're respecting them. Especially I think school age kids. They really want to be treated as individuals and as somebody who is in control of what they say and what they do. Obviously there are boundaries to that....The nature of my study was..."There really are no right answers and I honestly want to know what you want to say and that's it." I mean I had no goals in mind for what you're supposed to say and they liked that. They liked that I really wanted to know and I wasn't putting it on....I was just saying, "No, you have all the answers. You're my whole reason I just want to sit back and listen and whatever you want to say." So it was respecting them and what they had to say and who they were and then they respected me back. (3, pp. 19-20)

For Catherine, in the context of her study, it was a matter of respecting the children and what they said, and, as a result, they respected her. Her study was built on the

foundation of meeting children where they were and respecting them as human beings for their knowledge; they “had” her information.

Courtney’s account of her experience in her study of home-school connections in a fifth grade classroom illustrates several aspects of respectful relationships. She recalled how parents occasionally approached her with issues about their children or the class rather than the classroom teacher, Meg, her key participant. She explained that she always told Meg about these conversations as well as suggesting to the parents that they talk to Meg. As a result of her respectful behavior toward the teacher, she thought that her relationship with Meg was stronger.

Courtney was the director of the research study which involved a principal investigator, Peter, (her supervisor) as well as a team of graduate and undergraduate students. Simultaneously, she was conducting a pilot study of her research relationship with the classroom teacher, Meg. She described how she was respectful of Meg’s privacy by keeping private personal, non-study-related information that Meg shared with her. She realized that she could not share information shared by the Meg as part of her pilot study with Peter or other members of the research team despite the fact that it might be important in the context of the larger research project. This was because Meg often shared the information “in confidence”; Meg would say, “This is just between us.”

Courtney recalls,

At first I didn’t even realize that there might be a problem with me just saying, “Sure, this is just between us.” Sometimes she said that after the fact so I didn’t say, “No, you shouldn’t tell me this”So what I began to do is document everything in my fieldnotes but then I had a separate set of fieldnotes that were more public because I wanted to have the information, not necessarily that I would use any details but I thought it was important, if I didn’t capture them at the moment they’d be gone. But I also thought it would be a violation to include them in the public materials. (2, pp. 3-4)

As a result of this situation, Courtney started to keep a separate set of fieldnotes that were more public, for the group, so that she didn’t violate Meg’s confidences.

A third aspect of respectful relationships that Courtney described was respecting participants' humanness in terms of relationships with participants. She describes trying to maintain a relationship with Meg after the study ended,

This was a woman who in many ways I like a lot, feel very indebted to in a number of ways. Also feel sorry for in a number of ways but I realized that she and I would never have been friends....Just what was keeping us, from my perspective, as friends was this research project and so I struggled with that in terms of thinking about how honest I was being. I never told her that because I don't think that would be a nice thing to do. We've maintained a relationship, not nearly as closely as she would want since we've moved. We've each moved but I'm also just negligent with everybody so it's like (laughter) it takes me for ever to get back to people. It's not that I'm more so with her but I know that she would much prefer more regular contact than I give her. But it's not that I just dropped her once the research ended. In fact I've probably maintained a much closer relationship with her because I felt guilty with this need versus the research is over than I did with real friends who I wouldn't get back because here I felt an obligation in terms of the work and ethics and I didn't want to be unethical or to be perceived as unethical. (2, p. 8)

She noted how she maintained a closer relationship with Meg than with other people in her life because of the obligation that she felt to Meg incurred by the study. Both of them, however, have moved since the study ended and the relationship is not as close as Courtney perceives Meg would like it to be.

Bridget's account of her study of work in a health and safety organization revealed several aspects of her respectfulness in relationships with participants. She recalls, when going out with participants for drinks after work, how she was mindful of the fact they had just finished an often long and strenuous day working,

Thinking when I'm sitting across from someone who's part of the organization I'm studying, it would be a perfect opportunity to hit with them questions. "What about this? What about that? I saw this in the lab. What does it mean? I don't understand." To really get into it but you realize that...they've just finished a day of work. They want to relax. They don't want to talk about these things and so I wasn't going to ask about them. If they talked about something to do with work, I would gently maybe ask and if I felt like they just wanted to blow off steam and not talk about things, that was fine too. (2, pp. 15-16)

Her consideration of participants needing to relax and possibly not wanting to discuss work shows how she was respectful of their physical limits and social/personal needs.

Similar to Courtney's experience, Bridget was a member of a research team.

Thus, she was cognizant of respecting her participants' privacy, particularly with regard to personal, non-study-related information they shared with her. She explains,

People told me about their marriages or told me about their illnesses. I would just listen. I didn't put it in my fieldnotes. I didn't tell other people about it. I just listened. I think I used it to maybe be more sensitive to things about the person but that was it. I think if it was just a project with me, I would have put everything in my fieldnotes because it would be just me looking at them and that would be fine. In this case, I wanted to protect people. It's not the business of the whole research team this person's personal life or anything they want to tell me. Things that were related to them personally, I just didn't put in....It was pretty clear to me when people were telling me something that was important to them but it was not for public consumption and was not related to the project. (2, p. 16)

Courtney and Bridget implemented different strategies to avoid violating participants' confidences in the context of conducting research as a member of a group. Another strategy Bridget recalled using to respect people's privacy was to never repeat anything that anyone told her.

In the context of respecting the setting, Bridget explained that she did not speak or ask questions in meetings she attended because she did not feel that she "had any business participating in meetings" (2, p. 21). On these occasions, she assumed an observer role although, as she noted, she still experienced the meeting. She provides the rationale for her actions,

So my idea [is] maybe not always participating but experiencing and being there and spending a lot of time there. I also think you shouldn't interfere too much. I've seen that as well where the ethnographer says too much and says, "Well, I wouldn't have done it that way" or "What about this?" I think there really has to be a sense of respect and a sense of some kind of respect and distance from what you're doing. (3, p. 10)

In her setting, Bridget was concerned with showing respect for the staff and the professional work that went on at the organization. Further, when she was experiencing

their work, although there were times she would have liked to interrupt and ask questions, she always was respectful that these were professionals who were working, and that she was not one of them.

In her study of strippers and strip club audience members, Kate described being respectful of her participants in terms of their privacy, as well as the setting. As noted previously, Kate faced a potential breach of confidentiality by a participant that may have put all the other participants at risk of being identified as part of her study. She explains,

I was going to the strip club with this group of guys who knew that I was doing this study and I told them that their names would be kept a secret and I wouldn't tell anyone they were in my study. We were going out there and nobody else from the university was there so there was no-one that they saw. They were the only ones they knew each other and then with the situation that happened, if I was going to dance, all sorts of people who heard about the fact that I was going to dance were going to go there and if they went there then I would be bringing people who don't normally go there to see the guys there who normally go there and even if the guy who told about the study to the chain of people hadn't said, "Oh these other four guys are in the study also," if these people who don't come, come and see the guy who told with these other three guys, they'll assume, "Oh those are ones in the study too"....So I felt a responsibility to protect...the guys... who I had asked to be in my study. (3, pp. 20-21)

Kate noted that her decision making was guided by trying "to do what I saw to be the best for everyone involved" (2, p. 7). For the strip club audience member participants in her study, this involved protecting their privacy in terms of being participants in her study. She also faced a situation where an out-of-town acquaintance of one of the audience member participants showed up for one of the visits to the strip club. She describes how she decided to respond in this instance,

One time somebody came with the guys, showed up from out of town that didn't know about the study and [I] decided not to tell them....I wanted to have the opportunity to go again and observe some more. What if this guy said no? I'd be wrecking the time for their friend [from] out of town. I made the decision that I just wouldn't say anything and he wouldn't be in here. So I actually left out that whole [visit]. I mean I always learned from it and it influenced what I said but I left out all the quotes. That time...I guess I was just a participant. (2, p. 17)

On this occasion, Kate respected the presence of a non-participant in the setting by not having her research agenda potentially interfere with his visit.

These excerpts illustrate several aspects of respecting participants as intellectual, physical, and emotional beings. A related component in the theme of participant observation relationships as respectful is respecting participants as human beings in terms of not using them solely as means to an end but fulfilling obligations to participants arising from being in relationship with them. These excerpts also illustrate my participants' experiences with respecting participants' privacy. This encompasses observing boundaries that they set in relationships, not using personal information, or information not related to the study at hand, and keeping their participation in the study confidential. Yet another aspect of participant observation relationships as respectful evidenced by these excerpts is scientists' respect for the setting, including participants' roles in the setting and non-participants who are present.

Reciprocal

Successful participant observation depends upon participants sharing their lives and experiences with scientists. Reciprocity by scientists in research relationships serves to help make relationships successful, to fulfill scientists' obligations to participants that arise from being in relationship with them, and to help equalize the exchange by meeting participants' needs in whatever ways are possible. Primary motivators for scientists' reciprocity derive from human qualities such as happiness, and a desire to help or respond to identified needs. Through role presentations, scientists achieve reciprocity in their relationships through being in relation with participants, being a resource, and, in some cases, not requiring anything of participants other than sharing information.

Undoubtedly in research relationships, participants give a lot of themselves. An analysis of my participants' accounts of their experiences evidenced giving on the part of

their participants included: providing information about their lives; granting access to their lives; giving their time to scientists; presenting opportunities for additional learning and different experiences; providing access to their thoughts, experiences, and emotions; making contacts for scientists; and giving gifts and sharing meals. The success of most participant observation research depends on the willingness of participants to share. Courtney remarks candidly about the role of her key participant in her study of home-school connections in a fifth grade classroom, “It was all dependent on her. And she gave me research. Without her I wouldn’t have been able to do this work” (3, 19).

Giving on the part of the scientists, however, is less obvious beyond material goods, such as small gifts or tokens of appreciation, and occasionally providing participants resources, such as money and transportation. Although, as discussed in Chapter 2, *being with* relationships require scientists to develop relationships with participants that are reciprocal, the nature of that reciprocity is rarely elucidated in the literature, and thus remains ambiguous as a concept. My participants, however, provide rich accounts of their efforts to reciprocate in their studies. Their accounts evidence reciprocity that is material, informational, and emotional in nature, and that is an integral part of ethical and successful research relationships. From their accounts, two major considerations that impact reciprocity are: different relationships require different levels of reciprocity so scientists need to be aware of how much is needed in each one; and reciprocity takes different forms so scientists need to decide which is/are appropriate for each relationship.

The nature of participant observation research necessitates that participants contribute to the research in a variety of ways, including access, information, and time. In engaging in participant observation relationships, participants also give of themselves in terms of being in relationship with scientists. Ideally, participants volunteer to

participate in research studies, and usually, in participant observation, with no compensation. Further, participant observation studies often continue for comparably long periods of time, sometimes years. Thus, scientists' reciprocity with participants appears to be important, if for no other reason than in recognition of scientists' appreciation of their participants' contributions to the research. As identified from my participants' experiences, however, motivators for reciprocity derive from human factors such as happiness, indebtedness, a need to give back, a desire to help or respond to identified needs, respect for others, and a response to vulnerability of others. In the remainder of this section, I illustrate the theme of participant observation as reciprocal using excerpts from my participants' accounts of their experiences.

From her perspective, Courtney asserts, "Relationships should be reciprocal... there's a greater responsibility for the researcher...to reciprocate and give back to participants whether that is by one participating in ways that really work for a classroom for instance or a community or contributing money or resources" (3, p. 22). She explained that reciprocity needs to be ongoing, and beyond making sure that participants gain from the published work. In her study of home-school connections in a fifth grade classroom, she described reciprocity enacted at different levels and in different ways. For example, reciprocity at the classroom level was providing a camping trip opportunity and buying birthday presents for students; on a personal level with the classroom teacher Meg, reciprocity was sharing her own personal stories as well as going out with Meg. Courtney views reciprocity as an ethical matter,

I think I probably have rather simplistic views of ethics and it's just doing good. I think one needs to be a good person and work towards goodness and you might ask me what it means to be good (laughter). I think it's a bit more than the Golden Rule...I think it's more than that because...even in another study when I wasn't getting back even though I was promised a lot of things and I wasn't getting back, I always erred on the side of..."I'll take it." The fact that I keep getting blown off but yet I'm always there for the other person I just think it's important....I don't want to be mistaken for people...in past publicized participant observations where it was very

much like the researcher comes in and practically rapes a community or an individual and I'm so aware of that that I never want to be mistaken for that....it's selfish on my part as well because it's my reputation that I'm concerned about but it's to do more for the other person and if I'm getting a lot, I better be giving a lot. (3, p. 6)

Courtney explains the motivation for reciprocating with the classroom teacher, Meg, in her study, "In a way I felt a sense of responsibility to make things right for her in terms of her past injustices, past experiences, and so I found myself a willing participant in developing the relationship on a more social level because I thought it met needs for her in that way" (3, p. 2). Courtney described other motivators for reciprocating with Meg. One was the need to "respond in kind" when Meg shared with Courtney information about her abuse as a child. She commented that she does not know if Meg would have felt so comfortable sharing in the long run if Courtney had not disclosed personal information about her own life. Another motivator for Courtney's reciprocity was Meg's vulnerability created by her sharing of personal, sensitive information. Courtney attempted to make Meg feel less vulnerable, more empowered, by entrusting her with information of a similar nature. She explains, "I trusted that she wouldn't tell everybody about my background, my secrets and also I thought that it would help equalize issues of power....It's kind of like, "You show me yours, I'll show you mine" sort of thing, even though that wasn't explicitly part of the deal. In these conversations I do think its part of the deal in relationships and participant observation" (3, p. 19). More generally, Courtney identified as a motivator for reciprocity the value that she received from working with people, being in relation with them, and being given the opportunity to give back.

In her study set in a Montessori school, Jane described reciprocity in several contexts. In one classroom, it took the form of helping out with lessons and lesson preparation,

After probably the third day there (laugh) as a participant observer, [I] told the teacher...“I would really like the opportunity to teach lessons if that’s going to help you. I want to be able to assist you because I’m going to be here in this classroom so I want to be able to work within the culture of the school as unobtrusively as possible and I want to give back to you because you’re allowing me into your classroom. I mean I can cut out things for bulletin boards, whatever you need” and she said, “Oh no, that’s fine. That would be great. If a child comes over to you and you know the material, just go ahead and give the lesson.” (2, pp. 8-9)

Giving children lessons and helping out in the classrooms helped Jane to integrate into the culture, as well as reciprocate with teachers in return for allowing her to be in their classrooms.

Jane also described reciprocity with one teacher on a more personal level,

One of my first days there actually, she invited me out to lunch and I said, “My treat” because I was going to do an interview and we ended up talking for most of the time about her personal struggles because she had been going through some personal issues, relationship wise, break up of a marriage and a couple of things that were just really troubling her. We probably spent about five or six minutes talking about what I was doing so what I mean by that is that you need to be sensitive because for that particular time and place and lunch, I mean if you looked at it from a regular research standpoint, you’d go, “Well, there’s a wasted dollar” but she was the one that really became my main informant....She was the one that gave me information about Montessori organizations. She was the one, in all of these things, she became such a wonderful resource. I would go her and I would say, “This is what I’m observing” and I would show her a portion of my notes. I had carte blanche in that room as far as if I want to come and teach a lesson or anything like that....she really gave me so much. But if I hadn’t had the patience to sit through that hour of personal problems and what do I want to do with my life then I wouldn’t have been able to build the rapport that allowed me so much more. (3, pp. 16-17)

This event allowed Jane to reciprocate with this teacher by listening to her personal issues and struggles. She describes reciprocity with this teacher that was more professional in nature,

She had been going through a kind of transition in her life wanting to be able to write an article on Montessori from a parent’s perspective meaning the premise of her article is now why would a parent choose Montessori education? And that’s what she wanted to do and when I came into her classroom, she said, “I’m really trying to work on this particular writing...I don’t have necessarily language that I need to create this article. Could we sit down and throw some ideas around?”....she said, “You’re not writing an advocacy piece necessarily. You’re doing a doctoral

dissertation but from what you're observing, what can you help me with with my work?".... "What kind of writing techniques can I use? What kind of information have you gleaned from my classroom in your work that I can introduce into my perspective?" (2, pp. 23-24)

In this situation, Jane reciprocated with this teacher by helping her to write an article about why a parent might want to consider choosing Montessori education. She helped with writing techniques, and shared information with the teacher that she had gleaned from her time in the classrooms.

Jane reciprocated with the teachers in whose classrooms she studied by telling them at the end of the day what she had observed,

One thing that always I made sure that I did is that I always told the teachers, very formally, what I observed. I would say to them, "This is what I observed today...This is what I gleaned from our conversation. These are the main points. This is what I saw today." If I observed something that I thought would be useful to the teachers or that they needed to know, I would say, "Guess what I listened to today?" or "This is what I heard." (2, pp. 24-25)

Providing teachers with feedback about what she had observed in their classrooms was one way that Jane felt that she could reciprocate with teachers for allowing her to conduct her study in their classrooms.

In the context of her study more generally, Jane describes reciprocity in terms of recognizing the privilege that was afforded her by being given access to the setting, to the actors in it, and all that they, individually, gave to her,

I had that privilege to begin my research in this area through their words, through who they were, through what they gave me and if I learned anything at all...from my advisor which I have to give Ed credit for, is that really consider how to give back because again, I've written a dissertation, I'm a doctor, I've got a position now in academia all on the backs of the fact that they were gracious enough to let me in....I think that's what I mean by privilege is the fact that I was able to give back, hopefully, in some small way to recognize that it was a privilege and certainly I gave back to the teachers by giving them a small gift and certainly my undying gratitude because again, I wouldn't have been able to do the study without them. (3, pp. 12-13)

For Jane, recognizing and valuing the pivotal role that participants play in research is the basis for reciprocity, in whatever shapes or forms are appropriate.

In her study of interactions of first graders in their classroom, Debbie described her relationships with a small group of boys with whom she “hung around” as reciprocal. She described reciprocity in terms of helping them with their academic work as well as with personal issues, such as putting on necklaces and providing feedback on clothes. They would help each other and Debbie perceived that she was not asked because she was an adult, but rather because the boys perceived that she could help them at that time with whatever they needed help. She also had shared interests with the boys. In describing reciprocity in her relationships with these boys, Debbie differentiates these relationships from those with girls in the class, which she did not describe as reciprocal,

I think it goes back to them asking me questions about, “What did you do over the weekend?” Like the girls would ask me that but they weren’t interested. I would say what I did over the weekend and they would say, “Oh, okay” and that would be the end of it (laughs) but the boys seemed to ask me more. They seemed to be asking me about and have greater interest in me and again, I think it’s because of my interests. I’d be hiking, skiing, doing things with my dog. I think very few of the girls ever asked me about my dog. Some of the boys brought in pictures of their dogs. They wanted to know about my dog and what I did over the weekend so I think my interest had something to do with that as well....I didn’t come with sparkly nail polish and I didn’t come with lipstick and I didn’t come with rhinestones on my jeans (laughs) which I’m sure I would have got into conversations with the girls, “Where did you get those jeans? I have jeans like that.” I didn’t have that and it’s not that we didn’t have conversations but I just found it was much easier to keep the conversation going with the boys. And not all the boys but in general it was the boys.
(3, pp. 20-21)

Debbie’s role as classmate with the boys provided them with the help, loosely defined, that they needed, as well as information about her life, about which they wanted to learn based on their shared interests with Debbie.

In her study of homeless women in a literacy program, Betzaida describes reciprocity as having “a two-way” relationship,

That there's some negotiation around...how this relationship is going to work. Is one person going to have more power than the other? Is there some kind of equal exchange that's happening? Is one person getting more out of this than another? And a lot of relationships are like that. So that's...what I meant, that's there some reciprocity, that there's some give and take and that it's happening both ways. It's not just one person dominating the terms of that relationship. Mostly what I got was inspired by their stories and obviously published articles (laughs) and a doctorate. I often feel I did get a lot more out of it but I also did try to give back in various ways. Again things like I described....Gifts, furniture, clothing, meals, transportation, references for jobs, jobs, things like that and what the women gave me were just themselves. They shared their lives with me. There's no greater gift than that I think....but the intention of that exchange is what matters the most. That there is a good intention there. (3, p. 12)

Betzaida also identified roles through which she reciprocated with participants. She provided reciprocity through activities such as helping with children at breakfast, teaching, revising curricula, writing grants, providing transportation, tutoring, providing food and gifts, providing references for jobs, lending money, mentoring, and providing opportunities for first time experiences, such as going to the ocean and visiting a university. She describes how she felt when faced with her participants' needs,

I wanted it to be a reciprocal relationship so I did feel responsible for taking care of them in some way. I know it could be seen as patronizing...but that's not the intention. It was more, how can I really help her get a job? I could tell she desperately needs a job or she desperately needs an HIV test. How can I with the power I have, the privilege I have, how can I be responsible and see a problem and then how can I not address if it's there? And if you know what the potential solution or a service that might be able to help address that problem, how can you not say something? But I think a lot of researchers do feel like it's not their place to make any recommendations or try to influence the research in any way. Well, I was the opposite. I felt like how can I hear this story and sleep at night without me actually trying to do something? (3, p. 13)

Betzaida was very conscious of helping the women because she was getting her doctorate and would have opportunities that they would not. Thus, for Betzaida, the role of reciprocity was to try to equalize the exchange, to give to her participants in ways that made a difference in their lives in appreciation for sharing their lives with her.

Theresa described how she reciprocated through different roles that she played for different participants in her study of families participating in a social service organization. Theresa's presence as an adult in the house of one participant, Karen, gave that participant some relief in her life. She explains,

Rachel was a very active, very demanding...two year old and Steven was a very provocative, very, you know, in your face. He was the older brother....I think it just helped Karen to have another person there to help diffuse things, to help distract things. If the phone rang I could play with the kids and I'd do whatever. So I guess in some ways that was reciprocity. It was kind of a sanity keeper for her and it gave me information about her life. (2, pp. 16-17)

As well as distracting the children, Theresa was an adult to whom Karen could talk. She also provided Karen with transportation, driving her to job interviews and appointments, among other activities. For other families in her study, Theresa observed the fact that she was interested in their lives provided reciprocity. She explains,

The fact that they knew that I was interested in their lives was enough. That there was somebody who actually cared and who wasn't in it for anything other than understanding and learning and just accepted whatever was going on. I think that that had value to them just because I could be their friend and I wasn't bringing any baggage with me. All their other friends, they all had their own networks of friends, but everybody had a whole lot of baggage. While there was helping each other out....I could just be there and hang out and share their lives and I didn't bring anything with me in terms of anything. There was no cost involved for them. Of course the "cost" was that they shared their lives but that was easy enough so there was reciprocity only because or in the manner of our relationship and that was really important. (3, pp. 15-16)

Theresa asserts that she had reciprocity with every family because they had a relationship, "There was reciprocity that way, in the relationship in terms of a willingness to be with each and figure each out and learn about each other. So that was where reciprocity really came into play for us was just in how to have a relationship with somebody....There has to be some sort of motivation and what the motivation is isn't anything more than human interest, I think" (2, p.7). Thus, for Theresa, being in

relationship was reciprocity because of what being in a relationship means to her. Her perspective reflects Buber's (1923/1970) claim, "Relation is reciprocity" (p. 67).

Silvia describes the role of reciprocity in relationships arising from her experiences in her study of welfare families in urban public housing projects,

I think relationships are the key in reality because if you cannot establish relationships with people involved, you can't do this work. I think those relationships are built...focusing on commonality in similar experiences.... you basically go around establishing relationships based on those things and then seeing how you can make them reciprocal and if you can make them reciprocal, then it works and they give you entry. Sometimes it works without reciprocity for a little bit but sooner or later there has to be some reciprocity I think and that's maybe when they work the best. There has to be something in it for them and not just me....That they can get something out of it as well or they feel that they're getting something out of it as well. (3, pp. 4-5)

For Silvia, reciprocity is key to building relationships with participants. She describes an example of reciprocity in a very short-term relationship, "Even if it's a merchant who doesn't like the fact that that area is seen as racist. He ends up giving me all this information that I think it's his way of trying to correct the understanding so on one hand he's giving me information but on another there's something in there for him" (3, p. 5). She continues, describing reciprocity in more long-term relationships,

When the relationships are long term, the consistency of the relationship is what I think keeps the relationship and builds in a sense reciprocity because...I know that in a lot of these women's lives, I was the longest ongoing relationship they ever had....It's a consistency that people don't have in their regular life over time and that consistency I think is rewarding for them because it's an unusual experience. So I think that there's different levels of reciprocity in all of these relationships but I think that it's something a participant observer needs to be aware of how little and how much reciprocity needs to be involved and how much do you need this person and how much does this person need you. (3, p. 5)

Like Theresa, Silvia describes the reciprocity that derives from having a relationship, particularly long-term, with another person. Also like Theresa, Silvia described how she reciprocated with her participants through different roles. She provides an example of one woman whom people did not stay around,

She was not ever going to let me know that I counted for anything and she made that very clear. I would go to East Greenfield five times. I would travel all the way over there before finally she'd be there for an appointment we had set. I mean she used to blow me off all the time....It was months before she asked me if I'd like something to drink. Months!She would totally disregard me if somebody came and if people would call....She was the hardest, hardest, hardest, participant, hardest...that was also consistent with her life. People don't stay around her. I became valuable for her because I stayed around despite the fact that she did this. Then I realized that I was valuable to her after I came back for a follow-up and she had gotten all dressed up for me....But she would have never said. (2, p. 7)

Silvia was a consistent relationship for this woman. Although this participant did not verbalize to Silva how valuable she became because of the consistency of the relationship, Silva realized her value to this woman due to changes in the woman's behavior, such as dressing up for Silvia and offering her food and drink on her visits. Silvia notes the value of this woman to her as a researcher,

She'd be somebody who a researcher would drop after the first three mis-encounters. At the same time her information was extremely valuable and she became one of my prototypes for a particular type of family that's stagnating in poverty. The point I'm trying to make is that some respondents, when you do this kind of work, sometimes the ones that give you the hardest time are the ones who are best needed to be understood, and so if you can hang in there and press the issue, it's helpful. (2, p. 8)

As recounted previously, for another participant Silvia assumed a role as a psychotherapist (in which she had professional training) in response to the woman opening up to Silvia and sharing about her years of abuse. Silvia provided her with advice and support, and provided guidance about helping her daughter. Assuming this role enabled Silva to reciprocate with this participant by meeting a need that this woman expressed. Silvia describes the happiness that being able to reciprocate with her participants brought her, "I think that feelings are always attached to relationships so it's a good feeling to be able to reciprocate, for me, in these types of situations. That makes me happy" (3, p. 13). Thus for Silvia, the role of reciprocity is to ensure the success of

participant observation relationships. She asserts, "Everything revolves around reciprocity when it comes to human relationships" (3, p. 9).

In illustrating this essential theme of participant observation relationships as reciprocal using excerpts from my participants' accounts, I have demonstrated that reciprocity by scientists with their participants serves to help make the research relationships successful, to fulfill scientists' obligations to participants that arise from being in relationship with them, and to help equalize the exchange by meeting participants' needs in whatever ways are possible. I have also shown that primary motivators for scientists reciprocating with their participants derive from shared happiness, indebtedness, a need to give back, a desire to help or respond to identified needs, respect for others, and responsiveness to the vulnerability of others. Further, I have demonstrated in this section how scientists, via role presentations, achieve reciprocity in their relationships through being in relation with participants, being a resource, filling a need, and in some cases, not requiring anything of participants other than sharing information. This concludes my description of the essential themes of participant observation relationships.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have delineated the essential themes of participant observation relationship derived from my participant's experiences. I have described the essence of these relationships as having a professional/professional duality, built on commonalities, and as trustful, respectful, and reciprocal. This concludes my work delineating essential themes of participant observation and participant observation relationships arising from participants' experiences. In the following chapter, I reflect on my study's findings, and identify and discuss several implications for scientists who engage in this research activity.

CHAPTER 6

REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

Just as participant observation itself often is referred to as a paradox, academia's general stance towards participant observation appears somewhat paradoxical. On one hand, participant observation is often portrayed in the literature as a research activity that does not require any specific skills or training. Traditionally, according to Punch (1994), there has been a pragmatic, if not naïve, stance toward fieldwork in qualitative research. He observes, "Fieldwork is fun; it is easy; anyone can do it; it is salutary for young academics to flee the nest; and they should be able to take any moral or political dilemmas in their stride" (p. 83). Although he advocates for what he calls the "get out and do it" perspective, he qualifies his approach by stating, "Understandably, no one in his or her right mind would support a carefree, amateuristic, and unduly naïve approach to qualitative research" (p. 84).

On the other hand, participant observation is often described as a complex activity riddled with practical issues and ethical dilemmas that, customarily, have not been acknowledged in the literature:

Reports about field research usually describe the methods and techniques of the research. Less often do they tell of the researchers' social and emotional experiences: anxiety and frustration, as well as exhilaration and pride in achievement. These topics are discussed more often in personal conversations between field researchers than written about in the literature. But in field research the social and emotional side of the endeavor is more problematic than in any other form of inquiry. Frequently the formal rules and canons of research must be bent, twisted, or otherwise abandoned to accommodate the demands of the specific field research situation and the personal characteristics of the investigator. (Shaffir & Stebbins, 1991, p. xi)

Lareau (1996) describes her experience in her study of social class differences in family life and the influence of family patterns on schooling and education performance,

As I bumped about in the field not knowing what I was doing I often felt – incorrectly, as it turned out – that I was making a terrible mess of things, that my project was doomed, and that I should give up the entire enterprise immediately. This negativism came from my persistent feeling that, despite my having had a research question when I started, I didn't truly know what I was doing there....As I have discovered, using qualitative methods means learning to live with uncertainty, ambiguity, and confusion, sometimes for weeks at a time. It also means carving a path by making many decisions, with only the vaguest of guideposts and no one to give you gold stars and good grades along the way....I found it exhausting, as well as exhilarating, to be constantly trying to figure out what to do next. (p. 198)

Such assessments seem in contrast to the idea of participant observation as “easy,” something that “anyone can do.”

Prior to this study, through discussions in my work with scientists who use participant observation, I had come to view participant observation as a complex activity that was anything but straightforward. The growing volume of literature on ethical issues in participant observation and autobiographical “confessional” tales (Van Maanen, 1988) seemed to support my view. Conventionally, texts and reports about participant observation have focused on practical issues. For example, Shaffir and Stebbins (1991) organize their edited volume around the themes of getting in, learning the ropes, maintaining relations, and leaving and keeping in touch; DeWalt and DeWalt (2002) have chapters on becoming an observer, gender and sex issues in participant observation, and writing fieldnotes. de Laine (2000), however, adopted a different approach with her book, stating its aims as “1. To promote an understanding of the harmful possibilities of fieldwork, and 2. To foster ways to deal with ethical and practical dilemmas” (p. 4).

A phenomenological approach in this study allowed me to explore the lived experiences of scientists who conduct participant observation and enter into

relationships with participants for research purposes. My participants' experiences reveal participant observation and research relationships as multi-faceted and challenging. My analysis of my participants' accounts of their experiences enabled me to describe the essence of participant observation and of research relationships as experienced by my participants, rather than report individual anecdotes about ethical dilemmas and practical problems. These essences reveal this research activity as one replete with complexity. The complexity arises both from individual themes, and from their interaction. For example, participant observation as multidimensional (individual theme) necessitates that scientists simultaneously operate in settings in several dimensions. They have to participate in, or experience, settings and observe what is occurring. Observing while participating often requires collecting data while respecting settings by avoiding being disruptive or acting in ways that disturb the natural flow of events; for example, scientists having to hold information in their memory while interacting with children in a classroom setting rather than taking notes on a laptop or using a video or tape recorder. The reality of participant observation, however, is that themes constantly interact as scientists conduct their work and the study evolves. For example, the interaction of the essential themes of 1). participant observation as multidimensional and 2). research relationships as professional and personal results in scientists needing to keep a check on emotional involvement in relationships in order to maintain critical distance; balance personal involvement in relationships with research needs; and manage the emotional demands of different roles in different relationships. The complexity of participant observation and research relationships has implications both for the training of future participant observers and for ethical issues such as informed consent.

In this chapter, I explore implications of my findings in two areas and suggest directions for future inquiry. One area concerns the nature of participant observation

and the preparation of scientists who engage in it. In this area, I first discuss the tensions inherent in participant observation arising from competing obligations, and the form of advanced preparation scientists need in order to fulfill their obligations. Next, I discuss the notion of participant observation as “hanging out” and the skills needed for what is often erroneously viewed and presented as an uncomplicated endeavor. The second area concerns informed consent in participant observation research. First, I examine the adequacy of the principle of respect for persons as espoused in The Belmont Report (U.S. National Commission, 1979) in the context of scientist-participant relationships in participant observation. Then, I discuss limitations of informed consent as traditionally conceived revealed by my findings regarding the nature of participant observation.

The Nature of Participant Observation and Preparing Scientists to Conduct It Structural Tensions Inherent in Participant Observation

The activity of participant observation is replete with complexities and challenges for scientists. In addition to observing while participating, balancing multiple roles, and developing a variety of relationships based on commonalities, respect, trust, and reciprocity, scientists also have to navigate tensions presented by competing obligations inherent in the structure of participant observation.

In Chapter 4, I identified participant observation as multidimensional from my participants’ experiences. This essential theme requires scientists conducting participant observation to operate in multiple dimensions concurrently. As a result, participant observers need to partition themselves as they operate as humans and scientists, ascertain what parts of their lives are public and what parts are private, and manage multiple roles that comprise different responsibilities. In Chapter 5, I described the professional/ personal duality in participant observation relationships. Scientists initiate the majority of relationships in settings to serve the interests of the research

agenda (professional); however, scientists and participants alike often develop more personal relationships, and share personal information in the process of building and maintaining such relationships. As a result of the multiple dimensions in which they operate as well as the dual nature of their relationships with participants, participant observers face competing obligations. These arise from concurrent obligations to their research, their participants, and themselves as individuals. In this section, I examine these competing obligations, as revealed by my participants, and the implications for scientists who employ this research activity, predominantly in terms of preparing future participant observers.

Scientists, like other professionals, have obligations to their profession. Most professional associations set forth their members' obligations in codes of conduct or codes of ethics. Such codes often delineate principles and ethical standards that underlie the professional's responsibilities and conduct. For example, the American Sociological Association (ASA) identifies the following values to guide sociologists in determining ethical action in their work: professional competence, integrity, professional and scientific responsibility, respect for people's rights, dignity, and diversity, and social responsibility (ASA, 1997). The principle of professional and scientific responsibility states, "Sociologists adhere to high scientific and professional standards and accept responsibility for their work" (p. 4). My participants' accounts of their experiences identify obligations that constitute scientists' professional integrity to include: presenting an accurate picture of what they experience; maintaining their research/analytic intent; and, respecting the setting so other scientists can conduct research there in the future. Conducting research in accordance with the study's epistemological, theoretical, and methodological assumptions is also an important aspect of professional integrity. Moreover, scientists have obligations to comply with pertinent

regulations and laws. For example, in New Hampshire, scientists are mandated reporters of several activities, including suspected child abuse and/or neglect.

Another set of obligations that participant observers have is to their participants. These obligations arise from several sources: these include professional codes, more general codes of conduct involving the use of human subjects in research, regulations, and, in some countries and states, laws. Many of the obligations are grounded in philosophical and moral theory, such as not doing harm to participants (non-maleficence), not using participants solely as means to ends (respect for persons), being upfront and honest about the research (respect for persons), treating participants fairly and equally (justice), and respecting their confidentiality and privacy. Another source of obligations is participants' humanity: obligations to fellow human beings include respecting their ideas and their selfhood, and showing respect for them through our treatment of, and interactions with, them.

The third set of obligations that I identified based on my participants' experiences is their obligation to themselves. Participant observation is unique as a research activity because of the level of personal involvement of scientists in the activity. This arises from the need to participate in activities and engage in relationships with participants. Fox (2004) explains, "It is through ongoing interaction and a developing relationship with the individuals and groups who belong to the milieu being explored that the researcher enters ever-more deeply – psychologically and interpersonally, as well as intellectually – into its social structure and culture and the experiences, personae, and lives of those who people it" (p. 314). This level of personal involvement in their research means that participant observers (unlike scientists who employ research methods that do not require comparable levels of social, psychological, and emotional involvement) need to attend to their personal integrity so that they do not find themselves unwittingly in situations where their actions conflict with their personal

values. In the methodological appendix to *Street Corner Society*, Whyte (1993) recalls finding himself in such a situation after having (illegally) repeatedly voted in a local election,

I had been brought up as a respectable, law-abiding, middle-class citizen. When I discovered I was a repeater, I found my conscience giving me serious trouble. This was not like the picture of myself that I had been trying to build up. I could not laugh it off simply as a necessary part of the fieldwork. I knew that it was not necessary; at the point where I began to repeat, I could have refused. There were others who did refuse to do it. I had simply got myself involved in the swing of the campaign and let myself be carried along. I had to learn that, in order to be accepted by the people in a district, you do not have to do everything just as they do it....I also had to learn that the field worker cannot afford to think only of learning to live with others in the field. He has to continue living with himself. If the participant observer finds himself engaging in behavior that he has learned to think of as immoral, then he is likely to begin to wonder what sort of a person he is after all. Unless the field worker can carry with him a reasonably consistent picture of himself, he is likely to run into difficulties. (pp. 316-317)

Fox (2004) observes that identity crises are not uncommon for participant observers,

““What am I doing? Why am I doing it? Who am I? Who and what am I becoming?”

These questions, which usually occur in response to a critical field event, touch the core of the researcher’s sense of self, personal integrity, and fundamental values” (p. 319).

For example, Courtney’s key participant’s revelations about abuse prompted feelings of obligation by Courtney to reciprocate with personal information, yet she wanted to keep parts of her life private.

Inherent in participant observation and research relationships are structural tensions created by these often competing obligations. What should scientists do when obligations to participants appear to conflict with obligations to themselves? For example, Bridget often found herself in situations where she wanted to respond to participants’ overtures to develop their relationship on a more social level yet she did not want to reveal certain parts of her personal life. How should participant observers handle situations where professional obligations conflict with obligations to

participants? For example, Patricia saw her purpose of the study and her role as a researcher conflicting with her personal sense of obligation to female adolescent participants to provide them with resources for college that they lacked.

Active participation in settings involves engagement of scientists' human selves as well as their research selves. Thus, researchers need to draw on rational understanding as well as reach within themselves for their personal experiences and emotions (Gilbert, 2001). In addition to emotional involvement, scientists also bring to settings their consciences, values, commitments, and beliefs. For some, these may present concerns in terms of the research agenda, preferred neutrality and, in some research paradigms, detachment. Scientists who embrace their human involvement still need to recognize its influence on the study. Fox (2004) describes the "vertical journeying that participant observation involves" as "the enlightening, frequently painful, and often transmuting encounters with the researcher's own psychological and social, moral and spiritual self that participant observation entails" (p. 318). Drawing on her fifty years experience as a sociologist, many spent conducting participant observation, Fox (2004) observes,

When the participant observer notices her overinvolvement, she must recognize it, record it in her field notes, analyze it, and work to rectify it. Disentangling oneself sufficiently from strong feelings of antipathy and disapproval to proceed with the fieldwork in as receptive, open-minded, and inclusive a fashion as possible is not easy to accomplish, especially when the researcher's own social values and moral convictions are being challenged by what she is observing, learning and experiencing in a firsthand, participatory way. (p. 316)

Bosk (2001) asserts that when participant observers evaluate their behavior in settings, they use a pragmatic yardstick more often than an ethical yardstick. The question they ask is not whether their actions violated everyday norms, or even were illegal. Rather, the question is, did the behavior contribute to conducting the study? He states, "This mode of moral accounting does, however, draw attention to a central facet

of being in the field: the pressure to fit in, go along, suspend disbelief, and discount one's own moral autonomy in the name of research is enormous and, perhaps sadly, irresistible" (p. 203). This is observable in Whyte's (1993) reflection on his behavior as a "repeater."

My participant Betzaida's experience getting close to the experience of child abuse during her study of the impact of a literacy program on the lives of homeless women illustrates competing professional, personal, and participant obligations. Having witnessed one of her participants violently throw her young son against a wall, Betzaida recalled how before going to the program the next day, she spent the night thinking through the myriad considerations involved in this situation: her obligation as a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse; the safety of the children; her own safety as this woman was known to be violent; the consequences for the woman of being reported for suspected child abuse; the impact on her study; and whether to include this information in her study. Although this is a dramatic and tragic example that, I hope, few scientists will encounter, it illustrates the types of unexpected events for which participants need to be prepared in the contexts of their own studies, so that they know how to respond appropriately in terms of their obligations to their profession, their participants, and themselves. Taylor and Bogdan (1984) advise, "Not all researchers will find themselves in...difficult moral and ethical situations. We suspect, though, that these situations are more common than reported by researchers. Before you get too involved in a study, too close to informants, and too sympathetic to their perspectives, it is wise to know where you will draw the line" (p. 74).

The dynamic nature of participant observation, research relationships, and competing obligations result in constantly shifting boundaries that have ethical implications. Courtney describes this aspect of participant observation work,

I think in participant observations...the boundaries between participant and observer are constantly shifting and with that I think the boundaries between the ethics are constantly shifting....I think that the more one engages in participation, the more one engages in developing relationships, the boundaries between scientist versus person change and they shift and they become greyer. I think it's incredibly more complex in these sorts of ways of engaging in research than for instance a survey where there is no relationship developed [with] the individual. You have your ethics but...you can take them down from a shelf because they're the same....With participant observation, it's just it can shift from day to day, moment to moment. Even if one has a relationship where it's a study where for the most part these are the roles, on a particular day those can shift and even if that's an exception to most days, it changes the dynamics and it changes what's at play and so I really do think it's from moment to moment shifts, not just day to day. In doing so we need to attend not only to what people are saying but what they are doing and how they're doing in the context. I think it's pretty complex. (3, pp. 23-24)

Gilbert (2001) concurs, noting that the boundaries must be negotiated and renegotiated as an ongoing part of the research process in order for scientists to be able to remain cognizant of their obligations, for instance, to participants.

The constantly shifting boundaries and the competing obligations inherent in participant observation result in myriad challenges for scientists. It is crucial to recognize and incorporate these aspects of participant observation into the training and education of those who are going to embark on this activity. Doing so will better prepare participant observers for handling situations where shifting boundaries and/or competing obligations arise. By recognizing the constant interplay among the personal, emotional, and intellectual work of participant observation (Davis, 2001), and the potential conflicts that such work presents, scientists will be better prepared to handle ensuing situations.

According to Vanderstaay (2005), "A feature of many fieldwork settings, and a shaping force within ethical decision making, emotional stress and secondary trauma warrant planning and preparation before one enters the field. I believe the same to be true of the ethical decisions likely to be encountered in fieldwork" (p. 402). In his study, Vanderstaay compared the narratives of urban male delinquents about schooling and

their experiences in the juvenile justice system with those told about them by their parents, teachers, and court personnel. He describes how he prepared to conduct his fieldwork by reviewing similar studies, particularly with regard to the ethical dilemmas encountered by participant observers, and establishing guidelines prior to entering the setting. He claims, "These reflections were of enormous significance to my fieldwork, heightening my caution while helping me establish ethical guidelines before I entered the field. Most important, I significantly reduced the ethical dilemmas I faced by deciding in advance not to observe Clay's criminal activities or street life" (p. 404). Through his planning and preparation, Vanderstaay did not have to experience an acute dilemma, as others have had to, to know that he wanted to limit his observations in order to make his study feasible.

Codes of ethics are useful as guidelines to make scientists aware of the ethical dimensions of their work before going into settings (Punch, 1994). While codes of conduct and guidelines can guide scientists' actions, scientists' myriad, often competing obligations (described in the previous section) present a host of challenges and cannot be fulfilled through adherence to prescriptive lists of requirements (Murphy & Dingwall, 2001). Further, the situational nature of participant observation means that some dilemmas cannot be anticipated. While, again, codes and guidelines allow scientists to consider the fundamental guiding principles that govern research integrity, the situational essential theme of participant observation requires heightened awareness and sensitivity to the ethical dimensions of social research. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) call for an expanded notion of reflexivity in participant observation to include ethics, "Being reflexive in an ethical sense means acknowledging and being sensitized to the microethical dimensions of research practice and in doing so, being alert to and prepared for ways of dealing with the ethical tensions that arise" (p. 278). Such reflexivity takes skill and preparation.

Prior to entering settings, participant observers should consider the following in order to adequately prepare themselves to handle the competing obligations that they will undoubtedly face in some form: obligations to their profession and their participants; their values, beliefs, and commitments; how much of themselves they are willing to share in developing relationships with participants; what dilemmas they might face in their research settings; what dilemmas other participant observers in similar settings encountered, and how they addressed them; options for handling dilemmas that can be anticipated; limits to participation, such as refusal to engage in illegal behavior; and sources of guidance for dilemmas that require immediate action.

Scientists cannot possibly be prepared for every scenario that participant observation will present. Recognizing their obligations ahead of time, however, and being prepared, to the extent possible, for dilemmas that arise, will help to reduce scientists' chances of acting in ways contrary to their obligations, reduce the risk of harm to their participants, themselves, and their profession, and improve the quality of their research.

Participant Observation as Simply "Hanging Out"

In this section, I examine the notion of participant observation as "hanging out" and discuss the skills that are needed for what is often perceived and represented as a straightforward activity. According to the Oxford English Dictionary (2006), one meaning of "hang out" is "to spend or pass time, esp. habitually, idly, or at leisure, usually at a specified place or with specified company." Participant observation commonly is described as "hanging out," reflecting the inordinate amount of time scientists spend informally observing and participating in activities of daily life in settings.

My participants frequently used the term "hanging out" in their accounts of their research experiences. Catherine also used the term in the context of her personal life.

Here, I excerpt her use of the term in three different, non-research experiences. “But right now just hanging out with my kid and that’s about it.” “Just a lot of hanging out with friends. It was mostly just like hanging out in each other’s basements and renting movies, eating pizza, watching tv. Just probably what a lot of teenagers do.” “We’ve just been hanging out, the three of us, a lot and our hound dog. We love going to the beach, going on walks. Just like being outside a lot especially when it’s nice out.” In these non-research contexts, Catherine uses the term “hanging out” to denote time spent with people, with whom she has personal relationships, in activities that are leisurely, uncomplicated, and familiar.

I identified from my participants’ accounts the following characteristics of hanging out as an activity. The purposes of hanging out include 1). recruiting participants, 2). finding out who is entering and exiting settings, 3). accessing the dynamics of a setting, 4). getting “the feel of how things were,” 5). building relationships, and understanding contexts. Hanging out involves actions such as 1). being present over time, 2). observing as well as interacting, 3). being a general presence in a location, 4). immersing oneself in settings, 5). blending into the atmosphere, and 6). being transparent in settings (“see through”). Hanging out is used in the context of 1). waiting around, 2). being with, 3). being there for a person emotionally (in contrast to merely being there physically), 4). keeping company with, and 5). describing what scientists did. Hanging out describes an action in itself or one of many that constituted a relationship, but it is differentiated from doing specific activities mentioned, such as driving participants to job interviews as well as from the broader context of being with someone doing whatever that person did. Hanging out results in 1). becoming “see through” (transparent) due to a person’s presence, 2). people acting in ways that they would not have done if the scientist did not hang out, 3). becoming friends, 4). witnessing events that could not be planned (serendipity), and 5). seeing the differences between what

people think is important to talk about and what they actually do. Hanging out for research purposes is differentiated in the following contexts: 1). from the research role of observing, 2). from being a fly on the wall, 3). from hanging out that is not for research purposes, and 4). from just being in the community where the research is located doing everyday things. Seen in this light, the activity of “hanging out” in the research context as experienced by my participants is multifaceted and challenging.

Continuing this examination of the term, “hanging out”: if someone stated, “I hung out with off duty police officers,” we might assume that the person participated in activities that police officers might do on their time off, such as relax, play cards, watch movies, and spend time with their families. If, however, a person said, “I hung out with police officers while they were on duty,” we might assume that that person walked the beat or rode around in a police car, experiencing situations that police officers might face while working, such as making traffic stops and investigating crimes. The juxtaposition of these two scenarios emphasizes the need for scientists to know the activities of the specific group in order to know what they will be doing when they are “hanging out” with participants in particular contexts.

To contextualize the activities of hanging out, therefore, scientists need to know the following: the group (for example, police officers, firefighters, teenagers, graduate students, life guards); a specific context for that group (for example, on duty police officers, off duty firefighters, teenagers at shopping mall, graduate students during the semester, lifeguards at a beach [versus a swimming pool]); an environmental context (for example, police officers in a small Western town, firefighters in New York City, teenagers at a shopping mall in Manchester, New Hampshire, graduate students during the semester at Stanford University, lifeguards on a Hawaiian beach); and, temporality, the time in which it is happening (for example, the activities of police in New York City in 2002 will likely have a different focus than pre-9/11 whereas the activities of police in

Laramie, Wyoming might not). Thus, hanging out not only refers to partaking in the everyday, run of the mill activities that are peculiar to the group with which one hangs out but also speaks to situational, environmental, and temporal characteristics. And the routine activities of groups can change in response to a variety of factors, from political events or natural disasters to international events and societal influences.

My participants' experiences provide evidence that, in order to hang out successfully in the research context, scientists need to consider a range of issues. First, they need to have an idea of the activities in which they will be engaging, and to be prepared to partake in them, physically, mentally, philosophically, and emotionally. Hanging out may involve trauma, witnessing child abuse, breaking the law, engaging in undesirable activities, receiving verbal abuse, or boredom. Second, scientists also need to have self-knowledge to enable them to be comfortable with their actions after the fact, and they have to be able to fulfill their research objectives while participating.

Hanging out implies that scientists can be accepted in the community, and can go along with others in the group and do what they do. Accordingly, scientists need to be able to mold themselves to the group and to take on roles that are assigned to them by participants. This might involve looking or sounding like group members; acting like group members; accepting what group members accept; keeping quiet about nonconforming perspectives or beliefs, and altering their behavior. Acceptance also requires establishing commonalities, often by sharing personal information, as well as being trustworthy and reciprocating. Further, in order to fit in with participants and to understand their actions, scientists need to be able to understand their participants' perspectives. Scientists may need to look beyond disturbing or frustrating behaviors in order to understand their participants' worldviews, and put aside their own perspectives, prejudices, or personality traits in order for that understanding to occur.

Scientists not only need to fit in in general terms, but also situationally; they must be prepared to face surprises and to adapt accordingly. Questions scientists should pose to themselves include: do they know their values, principles, or limits so that when a situation arises they will not act in ways of which they will be ashamed later, either as scientists or as human beings, even if it means compromising one or more roles in the setting? how far will they go to fit in yet maintain personal integrity?

Developing relationships with participants that fulfill the research needs is another issue that scientists need to consider in order to hang out successfully. Duck (1991) asserts that developing relationships takes skill. It involves revealing attitudes, personalities, inner character, and, eventually, a person's true self. Self-disclosure is the main feature that stabilizes, establishes, and develops relationships of all types: it is done in a reciprocal manner with the partner in the relationship. Thus, in developing relationships with participants, scientists need to understand the process of developing relationships, as well as determine desired limits of acceptable self-disclosure and the effect of those limits on the relationship.

My findings, based on my participants' experiences, present a much more complex picture of "hanging out" in the context of participant observation than in a non-research context. Such a benign term for what is really an extremely complex research activity that is fraught with tension is, I believe, part of the reason why this research activity presents the range of issues that it does for scientists. When scientists cloak participant observation in the guise of "hanging out," they trivialize the complexities inherent in this research activity, including developing relationships with participants, and all the attendant issues that arise from being in relation with others for research purposes.

The treatment in participant observation texts of relationships is often inadequate or nonexistent. For example, in *Participant Observation*, Spradley (1980)

does not address the issue of relationships at all. The section on relationships (in the chapter on ethical concerns) in DeWalt and DeWalt's *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers* (2002) consists of two pages; their chapter on being a participant discusses issues such as culture shock, speaking the language, behaving appropriately, and establishing rapport, but does not venture into the issue of human relationships or human relations skills. When relationships are addressed in texts, the information is usually in the form of advice about managing roles in the field, managing relationships in terms of facilitating data collection (Atkinson, Coffey, & Delamont, 2003), or avoiding ethical issues. Mann (1970) notes that although most scientists receive good training in theoretical conceptualization and technical methods, they lack training in human relations skills that are critical in participant observation. Being in relationships that are sometimes personal and emotional in nature, for research purposes, as illustrated in the previous chapter, requires skill. Not only do scientists have to handle feelings of powerlessness and their emotional responses, they also have to be conscious of the impact of their involvement in their participants' lives as well as the consequences of responding to participants' needs. Participants' lives continue after scientists leave settings. Thus, scientists need to be conscious of their "footprint" on their participants' lives.

The lack of attention to relationships in participant observation (see as exceptions, Gans, 1982, Irwin, 2006, and Wong, 1998) is compounded by a lack of systematic research on participant observation. As a result, scientists, especially novices, often enter settings unprepared to face the tensions, complexities, and resultant challenges presented by participant observation and research relationships as revealed in my study. This is particularly true of the emotional impact of this work. Rowling (1999) recalls of her experience studying loss and grief, "Nothing that I read in planning this study prepared me for the emotionality of the research process....I was unprepared for

the intimacy and spontaneity of revelations of two years of fieldwork on this topic” (p. 175). She comments that most texts addressing the preparation of qualitative researchers focus on technical skills; rarely is guidance offered about the management of scientists’ own emotional reactions. Further, although she knew what personal and professional qualities she needed to carry out her research, she did not identify the personal skills she needed to manage the emotional impact on herself. My participant Theresa’s experience with the “shattering” of her research instrument emphasizes how critical it is for scientists to be prepared for the emotional and intensely personal work of participant observation.

My findings speak to the need for the adequate preparation and training of scientists who plan to conduct participant observation, including the development of skills and abilities that are critical for success, as well as the importance of providing guidance for novices while they are engaged in this research activity. To conduct participant observation, scientists need to be able to, minimally: operate concurrently at different levels (emotional, physical, and intellectual) while multitasking; be socially aware and sensitive to the needs of others; compromise in order to fit in without adversely impacting personal integrity; acquire advanced interpersonal skills; balance personal involvement with professional interests; articulate to participants the things with which they want participants to trust them; be flexible; and, be open-minded. Fox (2004) concurs, stating, “A set of trained skills are also necessary for conducting fieldwork....perhaps, above all, the interpersonal skill to manage, understand, and constantly analyze the socially complex and emotionally evocative role of participant observer that lies at the heart of fieldwork” (pp. 311-312).

Participant observation is complicated, fraught with tension, emotionally draining, and sometimes, very personal; the phrase “hanging out” does not do it justice. Scientists who plan on conducting participant observation should be well-prepared and

trained for the realities of the work they undertake in order to maximize the likelihood of success in their work, as well as minimize the risk of harm to themselves or their participants. Novices must also have support and guidance while in settings.

My participants' experiences underwrite the significance of this need, particularly for novice participant observers, during their time immersed in settings. Silvia, Theresa, Patricia, Kate, Judi, Betzaida, and Bridget recounted how people in their lives at the time of their research experience, whether formal advisors or other experienced participant observers, advised and supported them during their work in settings. They received various types of guidance and assistance, including help with writing and analyzing fieldnotes, keeping focused on the research intent, and working through ethical dilemmas. All noted the value of this support and guidance, as well as its role in the success of their research. Punch (1994) makes the point well, "Without adequate training and supervision, the neophyte researcher can unwittingly become an unguided projectile bringing turbulence to the field, fostering personal traumas (for researcher and researched), and even causing damage to the discipline" (p. 83).

The Nature of Participant Observation and Research Relationships, and The Belmont Report's Principle of Respect for Persons

The second topic for which I selected to explore the implications of my findings is The Belmont Report's principle of respect for persons. As I explained in Chapter 1, the motivation for this study stemmed from practical issues I face in my work as an administrator of a university IRB that reviews predominantly social science research, including studies employing participant observation. In many cases, the issues arise from interpreting and applying regulatory requirements shaped by biomedical and experimental models of inquiry to studies across a wide range of disciplines, employing diverse theoretical perspectives, methodologies, and methods. A primary tension I face

is accommodating scientists' methodological and practical needs while ensuring the protection of their research subjects and compliance with regulations.

In this section, I first discuss the implications of my findings about the nature of participant observation relationships for the conception of autonomy that prevails in research involving human participants. I then examine briefly the ethics of care (as espoused by Noddings) as an alternative framework for conceptualizing the relationship between scientist and research participant. Finally, I turn to a discussion of the limitations of the traditional concept of informed consent as highlighted by the nature of participant observation demonstrated in my findings.

Autonomy and the Nature of Participant Observation Relationships

Informed consent is a fundamental ethical consideration in research involving human participants (Chapter 2). In the United States, the guidelines for informed consent originate in The Belmont Report (U.S. National Commission, 1979). In The Belmont Report, the fundamental principle supporting and justifying informed consent is the ethical principle of respect for persons. According to this principle, an autonomous person is one who is rational and makes his/her own independent choices in a given set of circumstances, free from authoritarian influence or coercion. This principle assumes a traditional scientist-“subject” relationship. Such relationships historically have been characterized by: 1). a one way flow of information from scientists to participants that is controlled by scientists; 2). scientists' detachment toward participants and the setting; and 3). inequities between participants and scientists, in scientists' favor, with respect to power and resources (Brodsky, 2001; Blaikie, 1993).

In Chapter 2, I outlined the notion of autonomy commonly invoked in human subjects research. When used by scientists as part of the framework for protecting research participants from harm, the Kantian notion of autonomy requires scientists to act toward research participants without regard to contextual factors or consequences,

and with emotional detachment. Each participant is viewed as an independent, rational, agent devoid of particularities, entitled to the same treatment. Reasons to act are taken to hold with the same force for all participants similarly situated, without regard to consequences, including risk. I also reviewed key concerns raised by employing the Kantian notion of autonomy, and by privileging respect for human research subjects' autonomy using this particular notion of autonomy.

My findings (Chapter 5), however, demonstrate that participant observation relies on scientists forming personal relationships with participants. My analysis of my participants' accounts of their experiences with relationships in participant observation revealed those relationships as characterized by a professional/ professional duality, built on commonalities, and trustful, respectful, and reciprocal.

My participants frequently described their relationships with their participants in terms of the human element of the relationship, including care, love, and friendship, and how that played a significant role in the relationships. All of my participants described forming emotional connections with participants during their studies. They described these connections as feeling compassion, empathy, sorrow, anger, joy, affection, powerlessness, attachment, care, and love. Their participants' vulnerability often triggered emotions in them, such as appreciation, sadness, affection, respect, worry, and a need to reciprocate. Patricia succinctly expresses the human, emotional aspect of participant observation relationships when she states, "You feel touched and you feel moved and they are human beings so you can't not feel" (3, p. 24). Further, many of my participants described how emotions played a significant role in their attempts to understand their participants.

My participants talked about their participants' specific circumstances, such as particular vulnerabilities and level of emotional attachment, as triggering concerns and emotions. For example, Patricia described her feelings toward her participant who was

extremely ill, and Courtney described her feelings for her participant who shared a lot of sensitive, personal information with her. Further, my participants described material, informational, and emotional reciprocity with their participants. Most described such reciprocity as integral to ethical and successful participant observation relationships: that is, for participant observation relationships that are effective in producing good research.

All these points demonstrate that relationships between scientists and their participants in participant observation are qualitatively different from those of the traditional scientist-“subject.” Relationships characterized by the attributes described in Chapter 5 contravene the traditional notion of participants in research as “subjects” whom scientists study as inanimate objects. Thus, it may be argued that the traditional conception of the scientist-“subject” relationship and employing the Kantian notion of autonomy are inadequate for research relationships resembling those of my participants. There are startling disparities between scientists’ assumptions and priorities when we compare the two. For relationships similar to those experienced by my participants, in addition to respect for persons, another ethical concept, or indeed another ethical framework, may be needed in order to adequately protect research participants from harm.

My findings (Chapter 5) challenge the adequacy of both the conceptualization of autonomy and the principle of respect for persons employed in The Belmont Report. My participants’ accounts of their participant observation experiences evidence complicated relationships with their participants. As such, the Kantian notion of autonomy - absolute (no exceptions), individualistic (without regard to relationship), abstract (situation-independent), universal (applies to everyone), rational (dispassionate), and impartial (without preference to individuals) – appears to be too simple to be employed in participant observation research relationships. The complexities arising from

relationships characterized by my findings point to a notion of autonomy that is more relational.

The Kantian notion of autonomy gives primacy to individuality, self-sufficiency, and separation from others. As such, it values independence over all other values, particularly those arising from relations of interdependence, such as trust, care, and responsibility; it reduces people to uncomplicated agents who all resemble each other; and it suggests that values, practices, and relationships based on cooperation and interdependence jeopardize autonomy (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000). Further, the Kantian notion of autonomy is grounded in rationality, most often conceptualized as reason free from the influence of emotions. The respect due autonomous persons, called for by The Belmont Report's principle of respect for persons, requires that scientists refrain from interfering with, or constraining, participants' autonomy.

These conceptions of autonomy and the respect due autonomous persons underestimate the importance of intimate and personal relationships, and rely on an unrealistic image of people as independent agents (Donchin, 2000). They fail to recognize significant dimensions of the social embeddedness of persons in webs of relations: Lorraine Code claims that people are "second persons" who "only become persons in relations with others" (as cited in Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000, p. 6). Further, they fail to account for the fact that relationships are not always negative, and relations between persons, as well as being part of human existence, can contribute positively to individuals' lives (Dodds, 2000). Finally, they fail to acknowledge human corporeality; human experiences of life as complete entities make physical, intellectual, and emotional demands on them.

My findings (Chapter 5) demonstrate that participant observers form multiple relationships with a diverse array of participants. These relationships are characterized by complexity, diversity, situatedness, interdependence, emotionality, and reciprocity.

Thus, for research relationships such as these, we need more adequate and appropriate conceptions of autonomy and respect for persons that recognize and respond to these characteristics. We need conceptions that account for the relational nature of such research relationships, where scientists enter into personal and emotionally involved relationships with multiple participants: these relationships are often interrelated, forming networks or webs. These conceptions need to recognize the interdependence of scientists and participants, the importance of situation-specific factors, the role and value of emotions, and the multifaceted nature of research relationships, both in and of themselves as well as in larger social contexts. The Belmont Report's principle of respect for persons, and the Kantian notion of autonomy it employs, are antithetical to relationships characterized by these attributes, and as such, are inadequate and inappropriate for protecting research participants from harm in research situations where such relationships transpire.

In the following analysis, I use Noddings' ethics of care as an example of an ethical perspective that might be more responsive to scientists' and participants' needs in participant observation research where scientists' relationships with participants are more personal and emotionally involved. In so doing, I am not advocating for this ethical perspective. Rather, my aim is to present for consideration an alternative ethical perspective on the scientist-participant relationship, one that differs from that which has been envisioned historically. I also want to examine some objections to the suggested alternative perspective. All research relationships differ; thus it is unlikely that any one ethical perspective can respond to all adequately. Considering the merits and drawbacks of alternative ethical perspectives, however, may be fruitful for reconceptualizing the ethical dimensions of the scientist-participant relationship in participant observation as it is characterized by my findings. It seems that a fresh ethical perspective might assist

us in addressing the unique nature of such relationships, and the resultant complexities that they present.

The fundamental difference between the ethics of care (Noddings, 2002a, 2002b) and Kant's ethic lies in their respective priorities. For Noddings, the priority of the ethics of care is to maintain and enhance caring relationships, and to meet the needs of those to whom we are connected. Ethical behavior is that which maintains and enhances the relation and is performed with a caring attitude (Noddings, 2003). Verkerk (1999) states, "In the care perspective a relational account of moral agency and an idea of interdependency as characteristic of human existence are emphasized" (p. 363).

Receptive attention, motivational displacement, and reciprocity are essential characteristics of caring relations. Receptive attention and motivation displacement involve sympathy on the part of the one-caring (feeling with the other) and require that the actions of the carer/one-caring are directed by the needs of the cared-for (Noddings, 2002a). Reciprocity is necessary to, or a defining part of, the caring relation in that the cared-for recognizes, or responds to, in some form, the one-caring's actions: without acknowledgment on the part of the cared-for that the one-caring is caring, the relationship is not caring. Accordingly, commitment to a kind of attentiveness and responsiveness are central in a caring relationship, and are morally relevant factors in ethical decision-making (Beauchamp & Childress, 2001).

Although the particular objective of care behavior changes according to the situation and the relationship, the focus of the one-caring remains the same: on the cared-for, his or her needs, and the response of oneself as carer (Noddings, 2002a). Actions taken (or not taken) depend upon the specific individual and the concrete or particular elements of the situation, not on overarching principles or rules (Noddings, 2003). Noddings (2002a) notes, "We accept responsibility for the Other and are accountable to the Other, not to a set of *a priori* rules" (p. 50).

Noddings' ethics of care comprises involves natural caring, ethical caring, and an ethical ideal. The ethical ideal is constructed through our experiences as a cared-for and is cultivated by continual examination and cultivation of that ideal. It is an ethical ideal that is universally accessible. Everyone has it; it is composed of the best caring moments we have experienced. It is universally accessible because we all have to have experienced caring to have survived and developed into a person. Motivation for moral behavior (care) arises either spontaneously through natural caring, or through invoking ethical caring by deliberation on the concept of one's ethical ideal (Noddings, 2002a). None of these concepts is abstract; they are all grounded in present contexts, past experiences, possible actions, and in natural impulses.

The ethics of care requires that the one-caring promote the good of the other in the relationship and respond positively to the needs of the other, including protection from harm. According to Noddings (2002b), the one-caring has to determine what is good for each person encountered based upon his/her situation. She explains, "We ask, 'What are you going through?' before we act, as we act, and after we act. It is our way of being in relation" (p. 16). As such, the ethics of care is highly contextualized, it is not based in abstractions; it directly invokes attention and response on the part of the one-caring.

The ethics of care is also consequentialist in that it looks at the effects on relations (Noddings, 2002a). In the research context, the ethics of care requires an assessment of risks of harm and an assessment of the nature of harm presented by the research at the individual level, taking into consideration all the salient factors unique to each participant. Noddings (2002b) explains, "Care...requires attention to individuals, and individuals have different needs and interests" (p. 31). Risk of harm is assessed at the individual level, derived from each participant's unique situation, as it is unlikely that two participants will present exactly the same situation.

Accordingly, Noddings (2002b) argues that principles are an inadequate motivation for action: contextual factors are critical in maintaining caring relations and in meeting individuals' needs for protection from harm. Carse (1991) concurs, "An appeal to principle can not alone establish the moral validity of particular judgments, for the appeal to principle is itself valid only insofar as decisions based on the principle are good ones" (p. 12). This is because abstract and universal principles may ignore morally relevant features of specific situations. The ethics of care claims that in the research context, where the primary concern is protecting participants from harm, abstract and universal principles are inadequate for the task: this ethical perspective requires scientists to determine (as best they can) what is good for each participant based upon that person's unique situation. Ethics of care proponents claim that the nature of harm is such that the magnitude and probability is participant-dependent and each participant is uniquely situated. Accordingly, uniquely-situated participants can be protected from harm only where morality is derived from a scientist's caring relation with each individual participant, and where it is the scientist's concern to promote the good of each participant.

Identifying and responding to individuals' needs is a key component of the ethics of care. In a caring encounter, the one-caring receives the cared-for's 'motive energy' (Noddings, 2002a, p. 17) through receptive attention; if the one-caring is sympathetic to the plight of the cared-for, she responds to this energy via motivational displacement. Then the cared-for recognizes or responds in some form to the one-caring's actions: without acknowledgment on the part of the cared-for, the encounter is not caring. In a caring encounter, the one-caring responds positively to the needs of the cared-for, and the cared-for reciprocates: Noddings (2002a) explains, "When we care, we want to respond positively to the needs of another, and a primary need is protection from harm"

(p. 50). Responses are subject to the one-caring's judgment and situational characteristics of the cared-for.

In the ethics of care, harm is not only presented by the external environment: Noddings states, "Often our aim is to prevent harm, and we have to be concerned not only with harms that threaten from outside but also with those harms people may do to themselves" (p. 31). If a decision to participate in a clinical trial of a new drug would increase risk to the participants when safer alternatives exist, the ethics of care would require that in order to maintain caring relations and to meet participants' needs to be protected from harm, a scientist would need to help participants recognize that participation in the study would not be in their best interest, even to the point of coercion (Noddings), and to respond to their needs for a cure in a way that is more caring.

In the ethics of care, we see that attentiveness and receptivity are central to caring relationships and in responding to individuals' needs as one-caring. A carer's actions are motivated by feeling as much as their nature is determined by judgment. Natural caring requires feeling with and for the other whereas ethical caring requires a feeling of wanting to live up to one's own ethical ideals (Noddings, 2002b). Carse (1996) argues that emotions play an important role in moral perception, moral discernment, and moral response, and as such, also claims they perform an important role in decision-making about ethical issues. In studies of sensitive topics, such as rape, abuse, or drug addiction, sensitivity and responsiveness by scientists to participants' emotional distress are extremely important as extreme emotion or trauma could cause participants irrevocable harm. Decision-making by scientists based on factors such as their intuitions or emotional sensitivity that might entail actions such as stopping an interview, discontinuing a participant's participation, and/or recommending counseling due to a participant's emotional distress, could help prevent harm to a participant. Consequently,

the ethics of care cautions scientists to not discount the role of emotions in decision making on the traditionally espoused grounds that they distort judgment or introduce bias or inconsistency (Carse) into the research enterprise.

The ethics of care's grounding in caring relations also raises several concerns about traditional approaches to respecting autonomy in the research context, including whether it entails interdependence; applying a Western ideal of individualism to participants from more communal cultures to whom it is an alien and alienating notion; the construction of an asymmetrical scientist-participant relationship stemming from the scientist's expert knowledge; ignoring impaired participant decision-making capacity resulting from extreme pain or frailty; and finally, whether it entails an acceptance of the patriarchy and paternalism inherent in the research establishment that may negatively impact traditionally marginalized populations. If we adopted this ethical perspective, then different ontological assumptions about and emphasis upon human interdependence would lead us to reconceptualize autonomy in more relational terms (discussed earlier in this section) and lead us to give more serious thought to the previously mentioned concerns.

However, critics voice several concerns about applying the ethics of care to the scientist-participant relationship. One criticism addresses the ethics of care's priority of developing and maintaining caring relations and the feasibility of scientists doing so with many heterogeneous participants - participants who might be differentiated by characteristics such as gender, race, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, religion, sexuality, national origin, educational level, physical and mental abilities, and health. In addition to attending to the logistics of developing caring relations with each uniquely situated participant in a study, scientists would have to understand what promoting the well being of each participant entails, requiring knowledge of each participant's needs and interests. Critics argue that in such situations the application of principles to guide

scientists' actions is the most appropriate and effective way to protect participants from harm.

Ethics of care proponents offer two responses to this criticism. One response is that caring can occur in a momentary encounter: receptive attention, motivational displacement, and positive response on the part of the one-caring, and recognition and responsiveness of the one-caring's care by the cared-for constitute a caring encounter or relation, according to Noddings (2002a). There are no requirements for the number or longevity of encounters or relations in order to characterize them as caring. The second response is that Noddings (2002a) differentiates between caring-for and caring-about in order to address those situations where it is impractical or impossible to directly care for individuals about whom one cares. She describes caring-about as the grounding for the prevailing sense of justice. Noddings explains, "We are moved by compassion for their suffering, we regret it when they do not experience the fruits of care, and we feel outrage when they are exploited" (p. 22). Although Noddings attributes caring-about to relations in the public realm, it is also applicable to scientist-participant relations in circumstances where developing caring-for relations with every participant is impossible. As the objective of caring-about relations is to ensure that caring actually occurs (Noddings), and as caring helps to protect individuals from harm, the ethics of care argues that caring relations should be possible in all research studies.

Critics often worry that caring, taken to extremes, can turn into paternalism and become detrimental to the autonomy of the cared-for. This is relevant in the research arena, where scientist-participant relationships are usually asymmetrical due to scientists' expert knowledge, and where patriarchy and paternalism are already deep-seated in the establishment. The ethics of care responds to this criticism by claiming that paternalism is not reflective of a caring relation because reciprocity is necessary to, or a defining part of, the caring relation. Part of Noddings' (2002a) definition of a caring

relation is that the cared-for recognizes, or responds to, in some form, the one-caring's actions: without acknowledgment on the part of the cared-for that the one-caring is caring, the relation or encounter is not caring. Thus caring is not unilateral: caring requires reciprocal acknowledgment. This requirement provides important information to the one-caring whether her efforts are caring (whether the person wants to be cared for). Consequently, the requirement for reciprocal acknowledgment in a caring relation makes paternalism impossible according to the ethics of care.

Further, the ethics of care argues that paternalism is not reflective of a caring relation because it embodies control without "attentive love" (Noddings, 2002a, p. 136). In such situations, care that compromises the autonomy of either the carer or cared-for is "distorted" (Clement, 1996, p. 27). Caring action needs to be tempered so that the one-caring does not become over-involved, acting without being receptive and responsive to the needs of the cared-for, or without reviewing her own response (Noddings). Carse (1996) notes, "A firm sense of one's own boundaries is a precondition of sound caring for others; it is also crucial for the self-respect of the caretaker" (p. 104). If individuals are adults and are in an authentic caring relationship, then the one-caring will respect the cared-for as a person and will focus on responding to his/her needs.

Another research issue raised by critics of ethics of care is the involvement of emotions in decision-making. A certain level of emotional detachment is often perceived to be necessary to respond rationally and effectively in crises or highly emotional situations. Further, the emotional commitment and responsiveness central in caring relationships are seen as incompatible with the critical distance needed by scientists in order to avoid bias and collect what are deemed to be valid data. Ethics of care proponents respond to this criticism by claiming that a certain level of emotional detachment is not antithetical to the ethics of care as long as it is responsive to the needs of the cared-for and promotes his/her well being. Indeed, Noddings notes that being

receptive to the needs and interests of the cared-for in a caring relation may require a certain level of detachment. The level of detachment, however, will depend upon the circumstances of the other and will be context-dependent, not dictated by the application of a universal or abstract principle. As such, it will respond to the cared-for's needs, one of which is protection from harm.

In summary, the ethics of care can be characterized as relational, partial to persons, personal, receptive, contextual, and holistic; it is grounded in mutual trust, focused on particularities, and rooted in responsibility; it roots moral motivation in desire, and involves concern and discernment; and it both recognizes and values interdependence. Many feminists and care ethicists argue that the application of universal, rational, abstract principles and the Kantian notion of autonomy in research are morally inadequate for protecting research participants from harm. As I have indicated, they base their arguments on the following reasons: humans are social and as such are interdependent; ethical problems are often complex and context-specific; the magnitude and probability of harm are participant-dependent; and emotions play an important role in moral perception, discernment, motivation, and response (Carse, 1996; Noddings, 2002b). The ethics of care places priority on maintaining caring relations that involve attentiveness and responsiveness to the needs of the cared-for. Thus, it could be argued that for research relationships that are more personal and emotionally involved, such as those engaged in by my participants, and considering the nature of participant observation relationships I have described, the ethics of care, or a theoretical perspective more relational in nature, might be more appropriate than the Kantian perspective to protect human participants from harm presented by research.

Before concluding this section, I need to address the prospect that my findings may reflect a gendered perspective of participant observation relationships due to the fact that all my participants were female. Structural factors, such as gender, influence

research relationships, and research interactions are shaped by the social context of the research encounter (Manderson, Bennett, & Andajani-Sutjahjo, 2006; Roberts, 1981). Thus, my findings may not accurately reflect male participant observers' experiences with research relationships. As relationships play a pivotal part in participant observation, and due to the myriad ethical issues that arise from being in relationships for research purposes, research on male scientists' experiences with research relationships, and the meaning that they derive from them, is extremely important. If male participant observer's experiences differ, the implications of those differences on matters central to participant observation, such as conceptions of autonomy, the scientist-participant relationship, and informed consent, would be important to explore.

The Traditional Concept of Informed Consent and the Nature of Participant Observation

In this final section, I discuss limitations of the traditional concept of informed consent raised by the nature of participant observation demonstrated by my findings.

My research pointed to two pivotal issues relating to informed consent in participant observation research: one issue arises from the mismatch between the traditional concept of informed consent as an event, and the essential theme of participant observation as processual; the second arises from the disparity between the premise in the traditional concept of informed consent that all the information about a study is known at the start, and the emergent nature of participant observation.

Informed Consent as an Event in Participant Observation as a Process. As I stated in Chapter 1, many scientists view informed consent as a form that they are required to have participants sign. Thus, for many, informed consent is a document, the signing of which is an event. For others, informed consent is a two-stage event. In this model, scientists provide participants with the information about the study (one-way transmission) and participants then sign and give their "informed consent" to participate (if they refuse, presumably they give their informed refusal). In both scenarios,

scientists perceive that they have obtained or secured participants' informed consent, frequently evidenced by a signed document. The event model of informed consent conforms to the legal requirements for informed consent for treatment, and may be appropriate for many situations in medical practice (Berg et al., 2001). Further, if consent forms present all the stipulated information in a comprehensible manner, and consent of participants is obtained without coercion, eliciting "informed consent" (the event) from each research participant fulfills the spirit of the regulations in the research context. Indeed, critics (e.g., Kodish, 2003) often accuse IRBs of attending to the consent form at the expense of the consent process because of legal and regulatory concerns.

The Belmont Report (U.S. National Commission, 1979) states that informed consent is a process that can be examined in terms of the following three elements: information, comprehension and voluntariness. The event model of informed consent, however, is in stark contrast to the concept of informed consent as an ongoing process of information exchange between scientists and participants throughout the study whereby participants receive all the information about the study they need to make an informed decision about both initial and ongoing participation. Though the event model appears appropriate for much biomedical research conducted within the positivist paradigm, commentators argue that informed consent for research should instead be conceptualized as a process. Levine (1986), writing in the context of clinical research, describes the process of informed consent in research,

As individuals communicate with one another toward the goal of informed consent, each of the component processes may occur in any order. The most appropriate single word for these communications is "negotiation"; these individuals are negotiating informed consent. Many documents use different words; investigators often are admonished or advised to secure or to obtain informed consent. Such words do not capture the full dimensions of the desired interactions; viz, an interaction involving dialogue, encounter, and so on. The negotiations will be presented as if they had four separate component parts: 1) informing, 2)

assessment of the prospective consentor's comprehension, 3) assessment of the prospective consentor's autonomy, and 4) consent. In the real world, negotiations for informed consent are virtually never conducted as four separate component processes. (p. 99)

Here, Levine identifies informed consent as the goal of the process. Similarly, Kuczewski and Marshall (2002) assert that informed consent in clinical research is a social process influenced by a variety of factors. They contend that scientists need to recognize this and understand the decision dynamics related to informed consent in clinical research, in order to understand the process of informed consent in this setting.

My findings suggest that the event model of informed consent is inadequate for participant observation because of the processual nature of this research activity. Since participant observation is itself processual, informed consent must also be conceptualized as a process to be truly informed for ongoing participation throughout the study. Informed consent for participation in participant observation research, if obtained as a one-time event at the start of the study, will not be able to adequately reflect changes occurring through the participant observation process that significantly alter the 'knowledge' of the research upon which the consent was granted. Thus participants cannot be said to be truly informed about the research as it progresses.

The characterization of participant observation as processual arises from the experiential and relational nature of this research activity. Actively participating in settings and becoming involved in the lives of others, two essential components of participant observation, are themselves both processual. In order to share their participants' lived experience of a certain set of circumstances and constitutive events, participant observers need to insert themselves into their participants' daily routines and experience as much as possible. This aspect of participant observation involves a multitude of processes, such as gaining sponsorship or access. Experiencing participants' lives is processual in that scientists, over time, engage in the activities that

constitute certain aspects of their participants' lives. Scientists' presence in settings is also processual; participant observers engage in processes that are inherent in settings and outcomes of being in settings, such as effecting change, are also processual. The work of observing while participating over an extended period of time is characterized by process. Data collection, analysis, and interpretation take place while scientists engage in the lives of others and the activities of settings. These are not discrete, one-time activities; they are ongoing, over time as participant observers conduct their studies in settings, sometimes for years. Finally, relationships that scientists form with participants are processual in that they consist of a series of actions over time, and develop and evolve in response to changing circumstances.

Several commentators (e.g., AAA, 1998; de Laine, 2000; Grills, 1998a; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Howe & Dougherty, 1993; Miller & Bell, 2002; Moore & Savage, 2002) have proposed alternative conceptions to informed consent as an event. de Laine (2000) argues that informed consent might be more appropriately defined as "processual, and ever-changing, and subject to negotiation over and over again" (p. 95). The proposed alternatives have in common a process orientation, and an emphasis on shared understanding and ongoing negotiation between scientists and participants throughout studies. Little is known, though, about how proposed alternative concepts are actualized in settings in terms of balancing scientists' obligations to participants with their practical needs. There are a few accounts, however.

Moore and Savage (2002) report on their daily efforts to remind colleagues whom they studied within a clinical setting that they were collecting data. In addition to affecting rapport with some participants who thought that their judgment was being continually questioned, the authors' actions also affected their ability to become "see through" in the setting. Tolich and Fitzgerald (2006) report on a second or dual consent model used in indigenous research, particularly with New Zealand Māori and Canadian

First Nation tribes. In this model, scientists seek collective consent to conduct the research before starting. Prior to publication, they are required to return in order to seek permission to publish. Some research may present complications for this type of model, such as studying illegal behaviors, or studying an ill-defined group or a group that does not involve the same people for an extended period. Fluehr-Lobban (2003), however, asserts, "Participant observation...is a continuous process of negotiated entry and acceptance and offers many opportunities for discussions between researcher and participants that reflect the spirit and intent of informed consent" (p. 169). Thus, at least in theory, the processual nature of participant observation itself presents many possibilities for us to reconceptualize informed consent as a process; the ongoing negotiation of consent can occur throughout the study as part of the participant observation process itself.

Further work is needed on the nature of scientists' experiences in the field and the nature of their relationships with subjects, as these undoubtedly will affect the effectiveness of proposed reconceptualizations of informed consent. In addition, studies conducted within non-positivist frameworks will be shaped by different underlying assumptions, including those that influence the scientist-participant relationship. For example, some feminist researchers (e.g., Oakley, 1981) advocate for more intimate relationships between scientists and participants, in part to redress power imbalances. The nature of such relationships will certainly shape alternative conceptions of informed consent, and thus the effectiveness of these models in terms of protecting participants from harm needs to be studied.

Further, my findings identify participant observation as a relational activity. Accordingly, informed consent in participant observation needs to be conceptualized as a social process between scientist and participant. Kuczewski and Marshall (2002) stress that conceptualizing informed consent as a dynamic and interactive process requires

consideration of many factors that may impact research participants' ability to make autonomous and informed decisions about participating in research, such as their socioeconomic background and language ability. More research on informed consent as an interpersonal process is needed in order to learn about different models, their feasibility and effectiveness, and mitigating factors. Such research, however, as Kuczewski and Marshall (2002) note, is much harder than simply studying informed consent as an event. This will be especially true in participant observation where scientists are concurrently trying to form relationships with participants. Adding to the complexity are the potential effects of a study on informed consent on the developing relationship. Such difficulties may explain why most research to-date on informed consent in research has focused on informed consent as an event, and on relatively easily measurable elements, such as participants' comprehension of the information provided, and attitudes toward the effectiveness of consent. In spite of the difficulties of studying informed consent as a process, Kuczewski and Marshall lay out an ambitious agenda for research on informed consent as a process, including the influence of demographic and cultural factors.

"Informed" Consent in Participant Observation. I turn now to the second issue raised by the nature of participant observation as revealed by my findings, and the traditional concept of informed consent: the disparity between the premise in the customary concept of informed consent that all information about a study is known prior to the start, and the emergent nature of participant observation. In Chapter 1, I identified characteristics of participant observation that present challenges for informed consent as commonly conceived. The first characteristic was participant observation's emergent nature. The emergent nature of participant observation arises from the processual, experiential, and situational essential themes, as well as the nature of research relationships. A central issue that the emergent nature of participant

observation raises for informed consent as traditionally conceived concerns information disclosure.

The “informed” part of informed consent, as prescribed by formal guidelines requires scientists to provide participants with information about the study. Types of information that must be provided include an explanation of the purpose of the research; a description of the procedures to be followed; and a description of any reasonably foreseeable risks or discomforts (Protection of Human Subjects, 1991). Informed consent, however, is only informed to the extent that scientists know and share information about their studies. Flinders (1992) observes,

Informed consent logically assumes a prerequisite condition. For consent to be genuinely informed, the researcher must be able to predict with reasonable certainty the scope and focus of the research. Doing so is of particular concern because, unlike experimental and large-sample research, qualitative inquiry does not aspire to high levels of predictability. Controlled variables and prespecified hypotheses are replaced by flexible planning and emergent themes. (pp. 102-103)

Earlier in this section, I described the processual essential theme of participant observation with regard to its incompatibility with the event model of informed consent. Participant observation as a process contributes to the emergent nature of participant observation in that outcomes of a series of actions over time that constitute this research activity are rarely fully predictable. Participant observation is dynamic, not static, thus all the information about the study cannot be known and presented to participants at the start of the study. For example, in Betzaida’s study of the impact of a literacy program for homeless women, making sense of data was a process that drove the evolution of her study as she realized that in order to make sense of her initial data, she needed more and different kinds of information.

The experiential essential theme of participant observation means that scientists may not be able to anticipate the types of experiences that they will engage in throughout the course of a study. Ironically, because scientists are studying participants’ lives and

experiences, participants in many cases may know more about what the research may herald in terms of experiences than the scientists do. In other situations, however, such as exploring a period of transition, neither participants nor scientists may be able to anticipate experiences. In such cases, Miller and Bell (2002) raise the question: to what participants are actually consenting when they agree to join a study? The authors observe, "While informing participants about the research aims at the outset of a project is vital, final research findings may not resonate with those aims. The precise nature of "consent" for the participants might only become clear eventually, at the end of a study, when the scientists' impact on shaping the study is visible" (p. 54). Betzaida's experience in her study provides an example of this aspect of participant observation. Her study started out as an evaluation of the methods teachers in a literacy program were using to teach basic literacy skills to homeless women. She started her research approximately one year after comprehensive welfare reform was proposed in the state where the organization she was conducting her study was located. As the effects of welfare reform impacted her study, such as participants dropping out of the literacy program and thus her study because they had to find employment, she became intrigued how welfare reform was being implemented in the state and its effects on the women the organization served. As a result, she altered her study to incorporate looking at the impact of welfare reform on this population, particularly aspects relating to educational requirements. Thus, the focus of Betzaida's study changed due to the effects of national and state welfare reform in her setting.

The situational essential theme of participant observation presents complications for informed consent in terms of full disclosure of research aims, activities, and what kinds of data will be collected, and of ensuring participant understanding of what participation will entail. The generalizations that informed consent undoubtedly requires for practical purposes lack the complexity and specificity of any one situation

that may arise in participant observation. Further, de Laine (2000) notes, “Many of the ethical and moral dilemmas cannot be adequately anticipated because of their futuristic and potential or emergent nature that require on the spot solutions” (p. 143). For example, in her study of welfare families in public housing, Silvia did not anticipate having to take on the role of psychotherapist for a participant. Another example is Betzaida’s experience of witnessing child abuse in a participant’s home and the subsequent consequences of reporting that incident to authorities. Thus, even if obtained to a reasonable degree at the start of a study, informed consent will inevitably decay over time as the research unfolds (Howe & Dougherty, 1993) and the terms of participation change (Miller & Bell, 2002). In other cases, some information about the study will never be known, such as risks, because certain situations never presented themselves yet were always possible.

Relationships that participant observers engage in with participants also contribute to the emergent nature of participant observation. Unlike scientists’ relationships with participants based on positivist assumptions, which call for detachment, participant observers form a variety of relationships with participants, depending upon factors such as the level of personal involvement and duration of the relationship. Some participant observers form relationships with participants that continue after the study is finished; others form relationships that are less intimate and are temporary in that they end as soon as the study ends. More commonly, however, participant observers form a variety of relationships with individuals in settings, varying in level of intimacy and duration, depending upon the individuals involved. Thus, participant observers cannot predict the types of relationships they will develop with participants, making it impossible to present upfront information about them. Nor can they anticipate the possible results of personalized interactions (Angrosino & Mays de Pérez, 2000).

Relationships develop over time and thus are emergent. For example, in her study of home-school connections in a fifth grade classroom, Courtney did not anticipate her key participant divulging very sensitive information about her abuse as a child, nor did she envision developing a friendship-like relationship with this participant. Thus, disclosure of information to participants about the evolving relationship itself presents a significant issue for participant observers, as does the rational-based construction of informed consent which, de Laine (2000) contends, is inadequate to address the “context-specific, value and emotion-laden” nature of fieldwork and its associated ambiguities.

Reconceptualizing informed consent as a process can address the problems identified above. Informed consent as a process that is ongoing and renegotiated throughout a study can accommodate the provision of evolving information about the study and participants’ involvement as it becomes known to the scientist. In this form, disclosure of information can meet Levine’s (1986) proposed standard (Chapter 2): as participant observers engage in activities with participants and develop personal relationships over an extended period of time, they gather the requisite knowledge and have the opportunity to disclose information according to the “subjective” standard. Fluehr-Lobban (1993) concurs, arguing, “Informed consent can be as flexible as the course of fieldwork itself” (p. 171). There are numerous opportunities for future research in this area. Some key issues are how participant observers manage the informed consent process while trying to build relationships with subjects, the effect of disclosure upon developing relationships, and how participant observers address disclosure about the relationship itself.

This is an era of multiple epistemologies, theoretical perspectives, methodologies, methods, areas and topics of inquiry, and types of relationships with, and diversity of,

research participants. Levine (1986) summarizes the realities of, and future for, informed consent in research in such an era,

The nature and definition of informed consent cannot be described definitively in the abstract. Functionally relevant definitions can be developed only in relation to specific proposals. In each case, the investigator should draft the proposal based on his or her knowledge of all aspects of the research and of the prospective subjects. The IRB should review the plans and negotiate with the investigator the minimum standards for that particular project. The investigator should then proceed to negotiate with prospective subjects with an awareness that the plan he or she has agreed to with the IRB often will have to be supplemented or modified to meet the needs of particular subjects. Thus it is that the nature and definition of informed consent are and ought to be continually negotiated and renegotiated. (p. 153)

The dynamic nature of participant observation requires scientists to reconceptualize informed consent in order to fulfill their obligations to their research participants. Scientists have been quick to recognize the practical limitations that informed consent guidelines present for participant observation. But they must nevertheless embrace the spirit and intent of the guidelines, and creatively draw on and leverage the processual nature of participant observation and research relationships. Scientists need to propose processes for informed consent that are functionally relevant to their studies and meet their obligations to participants. Further, in order to legitimize these processes within the research community, those who employ them need to demonstrate their effectiveness through research, not only in terms of practicality, but also in terms of protecting participants from risk of harm posed by the study.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Adler, P. A. & Adler, P. (1987). *Membership roles in field research*. Newbury Park: CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- American Anthropological Association (AAA). (1998). *Codes of ethics of the American Anthropological Association*. Retrieved February 21, 2005, from <http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ethcode.htm>
- American Psychological Association (APA). (2002). *Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct*. Retrieved April 4, 2005, from <http://www.apa.org/ethics/code2002.pdf>
- American Sociological Association (ASA). (1997). *Code of ethics*. Retrieved February 21, 2005 from <http://www.asanet.org/members/ecoderev.html>
- Angrosino, M. V. (2005). Recontextualizing observation: Ethnography, pedagogy, and the prospects for a progressive political agenda. In N.K. Denzin & .S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 729-746). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.
- Angrosino, M. V. & Mays de Pérez, K. A. (2000). Rethinking observation: From method to context. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 673-702). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.
- Atkinson, P., Coffey, A., & Delamont, S. (2003). *Key themes in qualitative research: Continuities and change*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Atkinson, P. & Hammersley, M. (1994). Ethnography and participant observation. In N.K. Denzin & .S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 248-261). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.
- Baier, A. (1986). Trust and antitrust. *Ethics*, 96, 231-260.
- Beauchamp, T. L. (1996). The role of principles in practical ethics. In L. W. Sumner & J. Boyle, (Eds.), *Philosophical perspectives on bioethics* (pp. 79-95). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Beauchamp, T. L. (2005). How not to rethink research ethics. *The American Journal of Bioethics*, 5, 31-33.
- Beauchamp, T. L. & Childress, J. F. (2001). *Principles of biomedical ethics* (4th ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Beauchamp, T. L. & Faden, R. R. (2004). Informed consent: Meaning and elements. In S. G. Post (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of bioethics* (3rd ed., pp. 1277-1280). New York: Macmillan Reference USA.
- Beckerleg, S. & Hundt, G. L (2004). Reflections on fieldwork among Kenyan heroin users. In L. Hume & J. Mulcock (Eds.), *Anthropologists in the field: Cases in participant observation* (pp. 127-139). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Berg, J. W., Applebaum, P. S., Lidz, C. W., & Parker, L. S. (2001). *Informed consent: Legal theory and clinical practice*. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.

- Berger, L. P. (2001). Inside out: Narrative autoethnography as a path toward rapport. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7, 504-518.
- Bhutta, Z. A. (2004). Beyond informed consent. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 10, 771-778.
- Birch, M. & Miller, T. (2002). Encouraging participation: Ethics and responsibilities. In M. Mauthner, M. Birch, J. Jessop, & T. Miller (Eds.), *Ethics in qualitative research* (pp. 91-106). London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Blackwood, E. (1995). Falling in love with an-other lesbian. In D. Kulick & M. Willson (Eds.), *Taboo: Sex, identity, and erotic subjectivity in anthropological fieldwork* (pp. 51-75). New York: Routledge.
- Blaikie, N. (1993). *Approaches to social enquiry*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bogdan, R. C. & Biklen, S. K. (1992). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Booth, W. C. (1983). *The rhetoric of fiction* (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Boothroyd, R. A. & Best, K. A. (2003). Emotional reactions to research participation and the relationship to understanding of informed consent disclosure. *Social Work Research*, 4, 242-249.
- Bositis, D. A. (1988). Some observations on the participant method. *Political Behavior*, 10, 333-348.
- Bosk, C. L. (2001). Irony, ethnography, and informed consent. In B. Hoffmaster (Ed.), *Bioethics in social context* (pp. 199-220). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Bosk, C. L. & De Vries, R. G. (2004). Bureaucracies of mass deception: Institutional Review Boards and the ethics of ethnographic research. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, 595, 249-263.
- Botes, A. (2000). A comparison between the ethics of justice and the ethics of care. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 32, 1071-1075.
- Boyd, C. O. (2001). Phenomenology: The method. In P. L. Munhall (Ed.), *Nursing research: A qualitative perspective* (3rd ed., pp. 93-122). Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers.
- Bradburd, D. (1998). *Being there: The necessity of fieldwork*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Brodsky, A. E. (2001). More than epistemology: Relationships in applied research with underserved communities. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57, 323-335.
- Buber, M. (1970). *I and thou*. (W. Kaufmann, Trans.). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. (Original work published 1923)

- Busier, H. & Pigeon, Y. (1999, April). Re-examining the nature of researcher-participant relationships in qualitative research. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.
- Callahan, D. (1984, October). Autonomy: A moral good, not a moral obsession. *The Hastings Center Report*, 40-42.
- Carrithers, M. (1992). *Why humans have culture : Explaining anthropology and social diversity*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Carrithers, M. (2005). Anthropology as a moral science of possibilities. *Current Anthropology*, 46, 433-456.
- Carse, A. L. (1991). The 'voice of care': Implications for bioethical education. *The Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*, 16, 5-28.
- Carse, A. L. (1996). Facing up to moral perils: The virtues of care in bioethics. In S. Gordon, P. Benner, & N. Noddings (Eds.), *Caregiving: Readings in knowledge, practice, ethics, and politics* (pp. 83-110). Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Clarke, M. (1975). Survival in the field: Implications of personal experience in field work. *Theory and Society*, 2, 95-123.
- Coffey, A. (1999). *The ethnographic self: Fieldwork and the representation of identity*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Colic-Peisker, V. (2004). Doing ethnography in "one's own ethnic community": The experience of an awkward insider. In L. Hume & J. Mulcock (Eds.), *Anthropologists in the field: Cases in participant observation* (pp. 82-94). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Collopy, K. S. (2000). Playing God: A phenomenological study of women's decision-making regarding selective reduction of higher order multiple pregnancies (Doctoral dissertation, Boston College, 2000). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 61, 2469.
- Cooper, M. C. (1991). Principle-oriented ethics and the ethic of care: A creative tension. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 14, 22-31.
- Cottle, T. (1977). *Private lives and public accounts*. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Daugherty, C. K. (1999). Impact of therapeutic research on informed consent and the ethics of clinical trials: A medical oncology perspective. *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, 17, 1601-1617.
- Davidson, L. (2003). *Living outside mental illness: Qualitative studies of recovery in schizophrenia*. New York: New York University Press.

- Davis, D. L. (1993). Unintended consequences: The myth of "the return" in anthropological fieldwork. In C. B. Brettell (Ed.), *When they read what we write: The politics of ethnography* (pp. 27-35). Westport CT: Bergin & Garvey.
- Davis, H. (2001) The management of self: Practical and emotional implications of ethnographic work in a public hospital setting. In K. R. Gilbert (Ed.), *The emotional nature of qualitative research* (pp. 37-61). Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press LLC.
- de Laine, M. (2000). *Fieldwork, participation and practice: Ethics and dilemmas in qualitative research*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (2000). The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 1-28). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.
- DeWalt, K. M., & DeWalt, B. R. (2002). *Participant observation: A guide for fieldworkers*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Dingwall, R. (1980). Ethics and ethnography. *Sociological Review*, 28, 871-891.
- Dodds, S. (2000). Choice and control in feminist bioethics. In C. Mackenzie & N. Stoljar (Eds.), *Relational autonomy: Feminist perspectives on autonomy, agency, and the social self* (pp. 213-235). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Donchin, A. (2000). Autonomy and interdependence: Quandaries in genetic decision making. In C. Mackenzie & N. Stoljar (Eds.), *Relational autonomy: Feminist perspectives on autonomy, agency, and the social self* (pp. 236-257). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Donchin, A. (2001). Understanding autonomy relationally: Toward a reconfiguration of bioethical principals. *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*, 26, 365-386.
- Duck, S. (1991). *Understanding relationships*. New York: The Guildford Press
- Edie, J. M. (1987). *Edmund Husserl's phenomenology: A critical commentary*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Ellis, C. (1995). Emotional and ethical quagmires in returning to the field. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 24, 68-98.
- Emanuel, E. J., Wendler, D., & Grady, C. (2000). What makes clinical research ethical? *JAMA*, 283, 2701-2711.
- Emerson, R. M. (1981). Observational field work. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 7, 351-378.
- Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I, & Shaw, L. L. (1995). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Faden, R. R. & Beauchamp, T. L. (with King, N. M. P.) (1986). *A history and theory of informed consent*. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.

- Fine, G. A. (1993). Ten lies of ethnography. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 22, 267-294.
- Flinders, D. J. (1992). In search of ethical guidance: Constructing a basis for dialogue. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 5, 101-115.
- Flory, J. & Emanuel, E. (2004). Interventions to improve research participants' understanding in informed consent for research. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 292, 1593-1601.
- Fluehr-Lobban, C. (2003). Informed consent in anthropological research: We are not exempt. In C. Fluehr-Lobban, (Ed.), *Ethics and the profession of anthropology: Dialogue for ethically conscious practice* (pp. 159-177). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Fox, R. C. (2004). Observations and reflections of a perpetual fieldworker. *Annals, AAPSS*, 595, 309-326.
- Freedman, B. (1975). A moral theory of informed consent. *The Hastings Center Report*, 5, 32-39.
- Friedman, M. (1993). *What are friends for? Feminist perspectives on personal relationships and moral theory*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Freilich, M. (1970a). Field work: An introduction. In M. Freilich (Ed.), *Marginal natives: Anthropologists at work* (pp. 1-38). New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.
- Freilich, M. (1970b). Toward a formalization of field work. In M. Freilich (Ed.), *Marginal natives: Anthropologists at work* (pp. 485-585). New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.
- Gans, H. J. (1982). The participant observer as a human being: Observations on the personal aspects of fieldwork. In R. G. Burgess (Ed.), *Field research: A sourcebook and field manual* (pp. 53-61). London: George Allen & Unwin (Publishers) Ltd.
- Gauthier, C. C. (2000). Moral responsibility and respect for autonomy: Meeting the communitarian challenge. *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal*, 10, 337-352.
- Gearing, J. (1995). Fear and loving in the West Indies: Research from the heart (as well as the head). In D. Kulick & M. Willson (Eds.), *Taboo: Sex, identity, and erotic subjectivity in anthropological fieldwork* (pp. 186-218). New York: Routledge.
- Gilbert, K. R. (2001) Introduction: Why are we interested in emotions? In K. R. Gilbert (Ed.), *The emotional nature of qualitative research* (pp. 3-15). Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press LLC.
- Gillon, R. (1986). Where respect for autonomy is not the answer. *British Medical Journal*, 292, 48-49.
- Glesne, C. (1999). *Becoming qualitative researchers* (2nd ed.). New York: Longman.

- Glesne, C. & Peshkin, A. (1992). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction*. New York: Longman.
- Goffman, E. (1989). On fieldwork. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 18, 123-132.
- Gold, R. L. (1958). Roles in sociological field observations. *Social Forces*, 36, 217-223.
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Emotional Intelligence*. NY: Bantam Books.
- Goodwin, D., Pope, C., Mort, M., & Smith, A. (2003). Ethics and ethnography: An experiential account. *Qualitative Health Research*, 13, 567-577.
- Gordon, E. J. (2003). Trials and tribulations of navigating IRBs: Anthropological and biomedical perspectives of “risk” in conducting human subjects research. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 76, 299-320.
- Goward, N. (1984). Publications on fieldwork experience. In R. F. Ellen (Ed.), *Ethnographic research: A guide to general conduct* (pp. 88-100). London: Academic Press Ltd.
- Grills, S. (1998a). An invitation to the field: Fieldwork and the pragmatists’ lesson. In S. Grills (Ed.), *Doing ethnographic research: Fieldwork settings* (pp. 3- 18). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Guba E. G. & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 191-215). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Gudorf, C. E. (1994). A feminist critique of biomedical principlism. In E. R. DuBose, R. P. Hamel, & L. J. O’Connell, (Eds.), *A matter of principles? Ferment in U.S. bioethics* (pp. 164-181). Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International.
- Guillemin, M. & Gillam, L. (2004). Ethics, reflexivity, and “ethically important moments” in research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10, 261-280.
- Hall, T. (2000). At home with the young homeless. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 3, 121-133.
- Harrington, B. (2003). The social psychology of access in ethnographic research. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 32, 592-625.
- Held, V. (1990). Feminist transformations of moral theory. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 50, Supplement, 321-344.
- Herrera, C. D. (1999). Two arguments for “covert methods” in social research. *British Journal of Sociology*, 50, 331-343.
- Hinde, R. A. (1996). Describing relationships. In A. E. Auhagen & M. von Salisch (Eds.), *The diversity of human relationships* (pp. 7-35). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Hoeyer, K., Dahlager, L., & Lyn e, N. (2005). Conflicting notions of research ethics: The mutually challenging traditions of social scientists and medical researchers. *Social Science & Medicine*, 61, pp. 1741-1749.
- Holder, A. R. (1982). Do researchers and subjects have a fiduciary relationship? *IRB: Ethics and Human Research*, 4, 6-7.
- Howe, K. & Dougherty, K. C. (1993, December). Ethics, Institutional Review Boards, and the changing face of educational research. *Educational Researcher*, 16-21.
- Husserl, E. (1958). *Ideas: General introduction to pure phenomenology*. (W. R. Boyce Gibson, Trans.). London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd. (Original work published 1913)
- Hume, L. & Mulcock, J. (2004). Introduction: Awkward spaces, productive places. In L. Hume & J. Mulcock (Eds.), *Anthropologists in the field: Cases in participant observation* (pp. xi-xxvii). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Humphreys, L. (1975). *Tearoom trade: Impersonal sex in public places*. Chicago: Adline.
- Hunt, J. C. (1989). *Psychoanalytic aspects of fieldwork*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- IJsselmuiden, C. B. & Faden, R. R. (1996). Medical research and the principle of respect for persons in non-Western cultures. In H. Y. Vanderpool (Ed.), *The ethics of research involving human subjects: Facing the 21st century* (pp. 281-301). Frederick, MD: University Publishing Group, Inc.
- Irvine, L. (1998). Organizational ethics and fieldwork realities. In S. Grills (Ed.), *Doing ethnographic research: Fieldwork settings* (pp. 167-183). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Irwin, K. (2006). Into the dark heart of ethnography: The lived ethics and inequality of intimate field relationships. *Qualitative Sociology*, 29, 155-175.
- Integrated Post-Secondary Data Systems (IPEDS). (2004). National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education.
- Johnson, J. C., Avenarius, C., & Weatherford, J. (2006). The active participant-observer: Applying social role analysis to participant observation. *Field Methods*, 18, 111-134.
- Johnson, J. M. (1975). *Doing field research*. New York: Free Press.
- Jonsen, A. R. (1996). The weight and weighing of ethical principals. In H. Y. Vanderpool (Ed.), *The ethics of research involving human subjects: Facing the 21st century* (pp. 59-82). Frederick, MD: University Publishing Group, Inc.
- Kant, I. (1988). *Fundamental principles of the metaphysics of morals* (T. K. Abbott, Trans.). Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books. (Original work published 1785)

- Kass, N. E. & Sugarman, J. (1996). Are research subjects adequately protected? A review and discussion of studies conducted by the Advisory Committee on Human Radiation Experiments. *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal*, 6, 271-282.
- Katz, J. (1972). *Experimentation with human beings*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Kaufman, S. R. (1997). The World War II plutonium experiments: Contested stories and their lessons for medical research and informed consent. *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, 21, pp. 161-197.
- King, N. M. P., Henderson, G. E., & Stein, J. (Eds.) (1999). *Beyond regulations: Ethics in human subjects research*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Kirsch, G. E. (1999). *Ethical dilemmas in feminist research: The politics of location, interpretation, and publication*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Kleinman, S. & Copp, M. A. (1993). *Emotions and fieldwork*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Knapp, S. J. & VandeCreek, L. D. (2006). *Practical ethics for psychologist: A positive approach*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Kodish, E. (2003). Informed consent for pediatric research? Is it really possible? *The Journal of Pediatrics*, 142, 89-90.
- Kuczewski, M. G. & Marshall, P. (2002). The decision dynamics of clinical research: The context and process of informed consent. *Medical Care*, 4, Supplement, V-45-V54.
- Kuhn, T. S. (1970). *The structure of scientific revolutions* (2nd. ed.). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Lareau, A. (1996). Common problems in field work: A personal essay. In A. Lareau & J. Shultz (Eds.), *Journeys through ethnography: Realistic accounts of fieldwork* (pp. 196-236). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- LeCompte, M. D., Schensul, J. J., Weeks, M. R., & Singer, M. (1999). *Researcher roles and researcher partnerships*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Lederer, S. E. (1997). *Subjected to science: Human experimentation in America before the Second World War*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Lee, S. S. (2001). "A root out of dry ground": Resolving the researcher/researched dilemma. In J. Zeni (Ed.), *Ethical issues in practitioner research* (pp. 61-71). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Levine, R. J. (1975). The nature and definition of informed consent in various research settings. In The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research: The Belmont Report: Ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research, Appendix I (pp. 3.1-3.91). Washington, DC: DHEW.

- Levine, R. J. (1986). *Ethics and regulation of clinical research* (2nd ed.). Baltimore: Urban & Schwarzenberg, Inc.
- Levine, R. J. (2004). Informed consent: Consent issues in human research. In S. G. Post (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of bioethics* (3rd ed., pp. 1280-1290). New York: Macmillan Reference USA.
- Lidz, C. W. & Roth, L. H. (1983). The signed form – informed consent? In R. F. Boruch & J. S. Cecil (Eds.), *Solutions to ethical and legal problems in social research* (pp. 145-157). New York: Academic Press, Inc.
- Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Lincoln, Y. S. & Tierney, W. G. (2004). Qualitative research and Institutional Review Boards. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 2, 219-234.
- Mackenzie, C. & Stoljar, N. (2000). Autonomy refigured. In C. Mackenzie & N. Stoljar (Eds.), *Relational autonomy: Feminist perspectives on autonomy, agency, and the social self* (pp. 3-31). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Macklin, R. (1999). Is ethics universal? Gender, science, and culture in reproductive health research. In N. M. P. King, G. E. Henderson, & J. Stein, (Eds.), *Beyond regulations: Ethics in human subjects research* (pp. 23-44). Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.
- Malone, S. (2003). Ethics at home: Informed consent in your own backyard. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16, 797-815.
- Mann, F. C. (1970). Human relations skills in social research. In W. J. Filstead (Ed.), *Qualitative methodology: Firsthand involvement with the social world* (pp. 119-132). Chicago: Markham Publishing Company.
- Manderson, L., Bennett, E., & Andajani-Sutjahjo, S. (2006). The social dynamics of the interview: Age, class, and gender. *Qualitative Health Research*, 16, 1317-1334.
- Marshall, P. A. (2003). Human subjects protections, Institutional Review Boards, and cultural anthropological research. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 76, 269-286.
- Mattingly, C. (2005). Toward a vulnerable ethics of research practice. *health: An Interdisciplinary Journal for the Social Study of Health, Illness, and Medicine*, 9, 453-471.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- McGuire, A. L. & McCullough, L. B. B. (2005). Respect as an organizing normative category for research ethics. *The American Journal of Bioethics*, 5, W1-W2.
- Merriam, S. B. (1992). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers Inc.

- Merriam-Webster's medical dictionary*. (2005). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.
- Miller, B. L. (1981, August). Autonomy and the refusal of lifesaving treatment. *The Hastings Center Report*, 22-28.
- Miller, T. & Bell, L. (2002). Consenting to what? Issues of access, gate-keeping and "informed" consent. In M. Mauthner, M. Birch, J. Jessop, & T. Miller (Eds.), *Ethics in qualitative research* (pp. 53-69). London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Mitchell, R. G. (1991). Secrecy and disclosure in fieldwork. In W. B. Shaffir & R. A. Stebbins (Eds.), *Experiencing fieldwork: An inside view of qualitative research* (pp. 97-108). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Mohanty, J. (1959). Individual fact and essence in Edmund Husserl's philosophy. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 20, 222-230.
- Moore L. & Savage, J. (2002). Participant observation, informed consent, and ethical approval. *Nurse Researcher*, 9, 58-69.
- Moran, D. (2000). *Introduction to phenomenology*. London: Routledge.
- Morgan, G. & Smircich, L. (1980). The case for qualitative research. *The Academy of Management Review*, 4, 491-500.
- Moustakas, C. E. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Mulhall, A. (2003). In the field: Notes on observation in qualitative research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 41, 306-313.
- Munhall, P. L. (2001). Phenomenology: A method. In P. L. Munhall (Ed.), *Nursing research: A qualitative perspective* (3rd ed., pp. 123-184). Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers.
- Murphy, E. & Dingwall, R. (2001). The ethics of ethnography. In P. Atkinson, A. Coffey, S. Delamont, J. Lofland, & L. Lofland, (Eds.), *Handbook of ethnography* (pp. 339-351). London: Sage Publications, Ltd.
- Noddings, N. (1984). *Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral education*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Noddings, N. (2002a). *Starting at home: Caring and social policy*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Noddings, N. (2002b). *Educating moral people: A caring alternative to character education*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Noddings, N. (2003). *Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral education* (2nd ed.). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Oakley, A. (1981). Interviewing women: A contradiction in terms. In H. Roberts, (Ed.), *Doing feminist research* (pp. 30-61). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.

- O'Neill, O. (2002). *Autonomy and trust in bioethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- O'Neill, P. (2002). Good intentions and awkward outcomes: Ethical gatekeeping in field research. In W. C. van den Hoonaard, (Ed.), *Walking the tightrope: Ethical issues for qualitative researchers* (pp. 17-25). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Oxford English Dictionary* (2006). Retrieved November 8, 2006 from <http://www.oed.com>
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Peel, E., Parry, O., Douglas, M., & Lawton, J. (2006). "It's no skin off my nose": Why people take part in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 16, 1335-1349.
- Peshkin, A. (1984). Odd man out: The participant observer in an absolutist setting. *Sociology of Education*, 57, 254-264.
- Poland, B. D. (2002). Transcription quality. In J. F. Gubrium & J. A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research* (pp. 267-287). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1989). Changing conversations about human science. In S. Kvale (Ed.), *Issues of validity in qualitative research* (pp. 13-46). Lund: Studentlitterature.
- Pope, C. (2005). Conducting ethnography in medical settings. *Medical Education*, 39, 1180-1187.
- Powdermaker, H. (1966). *Stranger and friend: The way of an anthropologist*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.
- Protection of Human Subjects, 45, C.F.R. § 46 (1991).
- Punch, M. (1986). *The politics and ethics of fieldwork*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Punch, M. (1994). Politics and ethics in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 83-97). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Ramsey, P. (1970). *The patient as person: Explorations in medical ethics*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Roberts, H. (1981). Women and their doctors: Power and powerlessness in the research process. In H. Roberts, (Ed.), *Doing feminist research* (pp. 7-29). London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.

- Robinson, G. (2004). Living in sheds: Suicide, friendship, and research among the Tiwi. In L. Hume & J. Mulcock (Eds.), *Anthropologists in the field: Cases in participant observation* (pp. 226-233). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Rose, P., Beeby, J., & Parker, D. (1995). Academic rigour in the lived experience of researchers using phenomenological methods in nursing. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 21, 1123-1129.
- Rothman, D. J. (2004). Research, human: Historical aspects. In S. G. Post (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of bioethics* (3rd ed., pp. 2316-2326). New York: Macmillan Reference USA.
- Rowling, L. (1999). Being in, being out, being with: Affect and the role of the qualitative researcher in loss and grief research. *Mortality*, 4, 167-181.
- Sadala, M. L. A. & Adorno, R. De C. F. (2002). Phenomenology as a method to investigate the lived experience: A perspective from Husserl and Merleau Ponty's thought. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 37, 282-293.
- Sanders, C. R. (1980). Rope burns: Impediments to the achievement of basic comfort early in the field research experience. In W. B. Shaffir, R. A. Stebbins, & A. Turowetz (Eds.), *Fieldwork experience: Qualitative approaches to social research* (pp. 158-171). New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc.
- Sanders, P. (1982). Phenomenology: A new way of viewing organizational research. *The Academy of Management Review*, 7, 353-360.
- Schram, T. H. (2006). *Conceptualizing and proposing qualitative research: Mindwork for fieldwork in education and the social sciences* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Schutz, A. (1967). *The phenomenology of the social world* (G. Walsh & F. Lenhert, Trans.). Chicago: Northwestern University Press. (Original work published 1932)
- Seal, D. W., Bloom, F. R., & Somlai, A. M. (2000). Dilemmas in conducting qualitative sex research in applied field settings. *Health Education & Behavior*, 27, 10-23.
- Seidman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences* (2nd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences* (3rd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Shaffir, W. B. & Stebbins, R. A. (Eds.) (1991). *Experiencing fieldwork: An inside view of qualitative research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Shaffir, W. B., Stebbins, R. A., & Turowetz, A. (Eds.) (1980). *Fieldwork experience: Qualitative approaches to social research*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Shamoo, A. E. & Resnik, D. B. (2005). *Responsible conduct of research*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Sherwin, S. (1992). *No longer patient*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Sherwin, S. (1996). Feminism and bioethics. In S. M. Wolf, (Ed.), *Feminism & bioethics: Beyond reproduction* (pp. 47-66). Oxford: New York: Oxford University Press, Inc.
- Shuttleworth, R. (2004). Multiple roles, statues, and allegiances: Exploring the ethnographic process in disability culture. In L. Hume & J. Mulcock (Eds.), *Anthropologists in the field: Cases in participant observation* (pp. 46-58). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Spradley, J. P. (1980). *Participant observation*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winson.
- Stacey, J. (1991). Can there be a feminist ethnography? In S. B. Gluck & D. Patai. (Eds.), *Women's words: The feminist practice of oral history* (pp. 111-119). New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc.
- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. (2003). Retrieved October 11, 2006, from <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/phenomenology/>
- Stewart, D., & Mickunas, A. (1990). *Exploring phenomenology: A guide to the field and its literature* (2nd ed.). Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.
- Sugarman, J., McCrory, D. C., Powell, D., Krasny, A., Adams, B., Ball, E., & Cassell, C. (1999). Empirical research on informed consent: An annotated bibliography. *Hasting Center Report, 29, (suppl)*, S1-S42.
- Taylor, S. J. & Bogdan, R. (1984). *Introduction to qualitative research methods: The search for meanings* (2nd ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Tedlock, B. (2003). Ethnography and ethnographic representation. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (2nd ed., pp. 165-213). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Telfer, J. (2004). Dissent and consent: Negotiating the adoption triangle. In L. Hume & J. Mulcock (Eds.), *Anthropologists in the field: Cases in participant observation* (pp. 71-81). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Tillmann-Healy, L. (2001). Between gay and straight: Understanding friendship across sexual orientation. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Tillmann-Healy, L. (2003). Friendship as method. *Qualitative Inquiry, 9*, 729-749.
- Tolich, M. & Fitzgerald, M. H. (2006). If ethics committees were designed for ethnography. *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics, 1*, 71-78.
- Tonkin, E. (1984). Participant observation. In R. F. Ellen (Ed.), *Ethnographic research: A guide to general conduct* (pp. 216-223). London: Academic Press Ltd.
- U.S. National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research. (1979). *The Belmont Report: Ethical principles and*

- guidelines for the protection of human subjects of research*. Bethesda, MD: Author.
- Urry, J. (1984). A history of field methods. In R. F. Ellen (Ed.), *Ethnographic research: A guide to general conduct* (pp. 35-61). London: Academic Press Ltd.
- van den Hoonaard, W. C. (2002). Ethical norming and qualitative research. In W. C. van den Hoonaard (Ed.), *Walking the tightrope: Ethical issues for qualitative researchers* (pp. 3-16). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Van Maanen, J. (1988). *Tales of the field*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Vanderpool, H. Y. (1996). Introduction and overview: Ethics, historical case studies, and the research enterprise. In H. Y. Vanderpool (Ed.), *The ethics of research involving human subjects: Facing the 21st century* (pp. 1-30). Frederick, MD: University Publishing Group, Inc.
- Vanderstaay, S. L. (2005). One hundred dollars and a dead man: Ethical decision making in ethnographic fieldwork. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 4, 371-409.
- Verkerk, M. (1999). A care perspective on coercion and autonomy. *Bioethics*, 13, 358-368.
- Walker, M. U. (2002). Autonomy, beneficence, and justice in a wider context. *Ethics & Behavior*, 3, 291-293.
- Wax, M. L. (1980). Paradoxes of "consent" to the practice of fieldwork. *Social Problems*, 27, 272-297.
- Wax, R. H. (1971). *Doing fieldwork: Warnings and advice*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Weiss, R. S. (1994). *Learning from strangers: The art and method of qualitative interview studies*. New York: The Free Press.
- Whyte, W. F. (1984). *Learning from the field: A guide from experience*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Whyte, W. F. (1993). *Street corner society: The social structure of an Italian slum* (4th ed.). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Wolcott, H. (1999). *Ethnography as a way of seeing*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Wolf, D. L. (1996). *Feminist dilemmas in fieldwork*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, Inc.
- Wolpe P. R. (1998). The triumph of autonomy in American bioethics: A sociological view. In R. De Vries & J. Subedi, (Eds.), *Bioethics and society: Constructing the ethical enterprise* (pp. 38-59). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Wong, L. (1998). The ethics of rapport: Institutional safeguards, resistance, and betrayal. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 4, 178-199.

The World Medical Association. (2004). *Declaration of Helsinki: Ethical principles for medical research involving human subjects*. Retrieved February 21, 2005, from <http://www.wma.net/e/policy/b3.htm>

Zajano, M. C. & Edelsberg, C. M. (1993). Living and writing the researcher-researched relationship. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 6, 143-157.

APPENDIX A

University of New Hampshire

Research Conduct and Compliance Services, Office of Sponsored Research
Service Building, 51 College Road, Durham, NH 03824-3585
Fax: 603-862-3564

May 25, 2005

Simpson, Julie F
Education, Morrill Hall
562 Chester Turnpike
Candia, NH 03034

IRB #: 3458

Study: Exploring the Experiences of Participant Observers

Approval Date: 05/24/2005

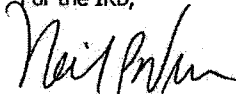
The Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB) has reviewed and approved the protocol for your study as Expedited as described in Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 46, Subsection 110.

Approval is granted to conduct your study as described in your protocol for one year from the approval date above. At the end of the approval period, you will be asked to submit a report with regard to the involvement of human subjects in this study. If your study is still active, you may request an extension of IRB approval.

Researchers who conduct studies involving human subjects have responsibilities as outlined in the attached document, *Responsibilities of Directors of Research Studies Involving Human Subjects*. (This document is also available at <http://www.unh.edu/osr/compliance/irb.html>.) Please read this document carefully before commencing your work involving human subjects.

If you have questions or concerns about your study or this approval, please feel free to contact me at 603-862-3106 or neil.vroman@unh.edu. Please refer to the IRB # above in all correspondence related to this study. The IRB wishes you success with your research.

For the IRB,



Neil B. Vroman
Vice Chair

cc: File
Cloffi, Grant