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# Ethnographic Methods

Kathleen M. Adams
*Loyola University Chicago*, kadams@luc.edu

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# 16 Ethnographic methods
## Kathleen M. Adams

## INTRODUCTION

Although ethnographic methods derive from the discipline of sociocultural anthropology, because of their potential for producing insights into human actions and behaviors they have come to be embraced by sociologists, psychologists, and other social scientists interested in gaining insights into human behavior. Ethnographic methods fall into the broader category of qualitative methodologies and are aimed at understanding cultural practices, human beliefs and behaviors, and sociocultural changes over time. As such, ethnographic methods are particularly apt for tourism-related research and for tourism policy planning, as noted by a number of recent tourism scholars (Cole, 2005; Graburn, 2002; Nash, 2000; Palmer, 2001, 2009; Salazar, 2011; Sandiford and Ap, 1998). This chapter (1) introduces the key elements of ethnographic methodologies, (2) examines the types of tourism research problems for which this research strategy is suited, (3) reviews challenges entailed in using ethnographic methods in tourism settings, (4) surveys key tourism studies grounded in ethnographic research, and (5) closes with a discussion of new visions for this technique in tourism research.

## NATURE AND EVOLUTION OF ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS

Anthropologists use the term ethnography in two senses. In the first sense, an ethnography is a written account of the socio-cultural dynamics animating a particular human population. In the second sense, doing ethnography (or ethnographic research) entails long-term fieldwork and draws on a mixture of qualitative research techniques all aimed at generating insights into sociocultural relationships and the "native[s]'s point[s] of view" (Geertz, 1976; Malinowski, 1922). As Fife notes, in this context "native" refers not to a concept of aboriginality but rather to "anyone who has grown up within a specific cultural milieu" (Fife, 2005, p. 71). In broad terms, ethnographic research methods are ideally suited for describing or analysing cultural practices, beliefs and behaviors, including encounters between different groups. Most ethnographic research does not entail theory-testing per se. Instead, it draws on "grounded theory", which entails conducting field research on broad themes and drawing on the data collected to develop compelling theories.

Foremost among the techniques that comprise the ethnographic approach is that of participant observation (to be explained below). But ethnographic research draws upon a variety of other research techniques, including in-depth unstructured interviews, structured interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, mapping, photography, and video-documentation. Ethnographic researchers also collect and analyse various materials produced by, for, and about the group being studied, including brochures, newsletters,

visitor and locally produced blogs, web pages, historical archival material, handicrafts, museum exhibits, and so forth.

Perhaps more than any other research strategy, the roots of ethnographic methods lie in travel and displacement. The earliest ethnographic researchers all lived amongst the people under study and participated to varying degrees in their daily activities. Franz Boas (1858–1942), a German-born scholar considered one of the "fathers" of American anthropology, spent a year in the mid-1880s living on Baffin Island where he researched the Inuits' adaptation to their physical environment (Boas, 1888). In keeping with the German tradition, Boas' data-collection strategy stressed the importance of direct observation (Ellen, 1984, p. 42). His subsequent fieldwork trips were generally shorter and often team projects wherein assistants adept in the local languages gathered, transcribed, and interpreted local community members' explanations of their cultural practices. Although Boas tended to make repeat research trips to the same areas, long-term immersion in the field and participation in local activities were not yet essential components of ethnographic methods (Eriksen and Nielsen, 2001, pp. 39–40).

Participant observation, the cornerstone of ethnographic methods, was not developed until anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski's (1888–1942) landmark research amongst the Trobriand Islanders in the South Pacific. Although Malinowski had not initially envisioned a 2-year immersion in his research setting, as a Pole from Austria-Hungary visiting British-controlled Melanesia when World War I erupted, Malinowski opted for exile in the Trobriand Islands over internment for the duration of the war. Partially as a result of this inadvertent long-term fieldwork, Malinowski came to believe that the most effective approach to researching cultures was that of participant observation. He laid out the principles underlying this methodology in his classic ethnography of the Trobriand Islanders (Malinowski, 1922).

Revolutionary in its day, one of the key ideas underlying Malinowski's vision of participant observation was that researchers armed with "real scientific aims" reside with the people being studied for an extended period of time (usually at least a year to enable observation of the annual cycle of events). As Malinowski wrote, "Living in the village with no other business but to follow native life, one sees the customs, ceremonies and transactions over and over again, one has examples of their beliefs as they are actually lived through, and the full body and blood of actual native life fills out soon the skeleton of abstract constructions" (Malinowski, 1922, p. 18). Malinowski believed that it was only through participating in and observing everyday life over a long period of time that anthropologists could hope to begin to see and experience the world through the eyes of those whose lives one seeks to understand. Likewise, he reasoned that as the community under study becomes more accustomed to the anthropologist's presence, the less likely the anthropologist is to inadvertently alter community members' normal activities. Malinowski also emphasized that long-term participant observation enabled anthropologists to come to recognize the differences between societal rules for behavior and actual behavior (what has been dubbed the difference between ideal culture and real culture).

Also, in a departure from the then-standard anthropological practice of relying heavily on interpreters, Malinowski stressed the need for researchers to become proficient in the local language. In his view, one could not possibly achieve ethnography's aim – "to grasp the native's point of view, his relations to life, to realize his vision of his world" (Malinowski, 1922, p. 25) – without mastery of the local lingua franca. Today,

particularly for those who study global processes such as tourism, this means that ethnographic researchers (ethnographers) must often be multi-lingual, with proficiency in a local language, national language, and some of the languages of international visitors. As Malinowski and others have stressed, ethnographers' culturally contextualized translations of quotations drawn from informal and formal conversations are a key form of ethnographic data, and are heavily used in ethnographies.

For Malinowski, one of the main points of the ethnographic methods was to collect "concrete data over a wide range of facts", recording it meticulously in a fieldwork log. As he emphasized, "the obligation is not to enumerate a few examples only, but to exhaust as far as possible all the cases within reach" (Malinowski, 1922, pp. 13–14). He directed anthropologists to gather data on local activity patterns, institutions, folklore, and even what he termed the "inponderabilia" of everyday life which included "things such as the routine of a man's working day, the details of the care of his body, the manner of taking food and preparing it; the tone of conversation and social life . . ., the existence of strong friendships or hostilities, and of passing sympathies or dislikes between people; the subtle yet unmistakable manner in which personal vanities and ambition are reflected in the behaviour of the individual and in the emotional reactions of those who surround him" (Malinowski, 1922, pp. 18–19). All of these, he stressed, were things which could not possibly be recorded via interviews or via documents, but only through participant observation (Malinowski, 1922, p. 18). These "facts", Malinowski emphasized, should not be simply recorded as detailed listings, but "with an effort at penetrating the mental attitude expressed in them" (Malinowski, 1922, p. 19). That is, ethnographic methods should entail a rich and diverse array of data and cases that, taken together, reveal the "emic" or cultural insider's perspective (Pike, 1967). Thus, with Malinowski's invention of participant observation, it was no longer acceptable for anthropologists to conduct their research as distant observers working with translators and relying solely on interviews (Eriksen and Nielsen, 2001, p. 42). Rather, ethnographic methods became an enterprise that centered on immersion, language mastery, participation, and cultural interpretation.

By the early 1970s ethnographic research began to be envisioned as entailing "thick description", a concept that was popularized by anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973).[1] For Geertz, "thick description" involves unearthing and explicating the multiple, nuanced, and layered webs of meaning of cultural behaviors, relationships, activities, rituals, and productions. This contrasts with "thin description" which tends to be "favoured by low-in-context conventional linear styles of research, and which are prone to focusing exclusively upon the cause-and-effect power of single variables" (Hollinshead, 2004, p. 92). As Geertz tells us, "From the point of view . . . of the textbook, doing ethnography is establishing rapport, selecting informants, transcribing texts, taking genealogies, mapping fields, keeping a diary, and so on. But it is not these things, techniques and received procedures that define the enterprise. What defines it is the kind of intellectual effort it is: an elaborate venture in . . . 'thick description'" (Geertz, 1973, p. 6).[2]

Dating back to the days of Malinowski, a major concern in ethnographic research methods has been with finding ways to ensure the reliability of data collected via ethnographic research methods. Malinowski's early directive for field researchers to constantly check one's data with multiple sources, rather than rely on a single "informant"

(the term used in Malinowski's day: today anthropologists prefer the terms "mentor", "collaborator", or "consultant") was echoed and elaborated upon by Raymond Firth, who cautioned that individuals' assertions should not simply be accepted as truths, but instead should be approached as "reflections of the position and interests of the people who give them" (Firth, 1965, p. 3, cited in Duranti, 1997, p. 91). Many researchers draw on the strategy of respondent validation, a process of presenting one's interpretations and write-ups of findings to various participants for checking (for a tourism study that draws on and discusses this strategy, see Cole, 2005, p. 64).

The mid-1980s blossoming of the post-modernist movement brought new attention to the ways in which the researcher's racial, class, national and gender identity, and personality shape the data-collection and interpretation processes, producing not objective scientific reports but what some termed "partial truths", a mixture of objective and subjective observations (see Clifford and Marcus, 1986). Since this crisis moment in the evolution of ethnographic methods, most who embrace ethnographic methods have sought to compensate for these biases in various ways. Many ethnographers adopt a self-reflexive stance, revealing the particulars of their identity and the circumstances of their field research and embracing the first person singular in their writings to signal their positionality. For an example of effective use of this strategy in tourism research, see Causey's (2003) penetrating study of Toba Batak carvers and tourist interactions in the handicraft market. In this study, Causey shares his experiences of his informal apprenticeship with a Toba Batak carver and in so doing readers come to better understand the challenges local artisans face and the ways in which ways in which they adjust their stories and products to the tourist market. As Simonds et al. (2012) summarize, "in the end, ethnographers are content to recognize that their observations are at once subjective interpretations of a mere fragment of their own constrained perceptions of social experiences and at the same time sensitive and intensely engaging but fleeting glimpses of life as it is lived by others."

A discussion of ethnographic research methods would not be complete without addressing ethics. It is essential to ensure that those we are studying are not compromised by our research, or made unwitting participants. Researchers are ethically required to secure permission for their research from the relevant gate-keepers (human subjects boards, national and local governments, etc.), and to reveal their research aims to those whose communities they are studying. Additionally, informed consent forms are the norm (Spradley, 1980, pp. 20–25). Generally, ethnographers are also careful to ensure the anonymity of community members, and use coded names in field notes and other writings, unless they determine that participants prefer to be named in their research publications.

# BACKGROUND AND TYPES OF PROBLEMS THAT ETHNOGRAPHY IS DESIGNED TO HANDLE

As many have noted, the clearest value of ethnography is in terms of its relationship to developing theories pertaining to social life (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 1991, p. 23). Engaging in ethnographic methods enables researchers to recognize their own misleading preconceptions concerning the motives underlying human behavior. Long-term

immersion in the research setting inevitably forces the researcher to reassess his or her prior understandings of the dynamics at play in the cultural setting under study. As the researcher's understanding shifts over time, he or she "can begin to develop theory in a way that provides much more evidence of the plausibility of different lines of analysis than is available to the 'armchair theorist', or even the survey researcher or experimentalist" (Hammersley and Atkinson, p. 24).

Ethnographic research methods are also ideally suited for tapping into local points of view. Ethnography can effectively unearth local peoples' perceptions regarding changes, challenges and triumphs in their worlds. Local voices – particularly those of minority groups who may speak different languages, be illiterate, impoverished and relatively disenfranchised from their nations – are notoriously difficult to access via classic survey methods and questionnaire-based interviews. Fear of giving the "wrong" answer, mistrust of outsiders, reluctance to speak honestly (and critically) to unknown temporarily visiting researchers, and power imbalances can compromise the validity of other research methodologies. As Berno observed in her discussion of her research on tourism in the Cook Islands, due to "a lack of familiarity with structured questionnaires and social science research in general, subjects tended to acquiesce, and a positive response bias was evident on questions that dealt with satisfaction with tourism and tourists" (Berno, 1996, p. 384, cited in Cole, 2004, p. 295). Long-term participant observation, however, enables researchers to gain the trust of the community members whose lives, perceptions, and attitudes they aspire to understand. Describing her ethnographic research in Eastern Indonesia, Cole underscores that "spontaneous, indoor fireside chats were a more successful technique than attempting to carry out questionnaire-based interviews . . . [and] disclosed information on topics that were not openly discussed at other times" (Cole, 2004, pp. 295–6).

This methodology is especially valuable for offering insights into how people conceptualize themselves vis-á-vis others, as well as into how groups are organized and how they perceive newcomers, be they migrants, tourists, new businesses, or new development projects. These attributes make ethnographic research particularly useful for gaining understandings of the dynamics underlying conflict situations. Ethnographic research can offer fuller data on the issues lurking behind the scenes of questionnaires and quantified surveys (Simonds et al., 2012). Members of disgruntled groups may be unwilling to fully air their critiques in surveys or formal interviews (particularly when they are unsure about the extent to which confidentiality will be maintained), but more likely to convey their frustrations to a long-term field researcher who has gained the trust of the community. The experience of participant observation enables the ethnographer to gain a first-hand appreciation of the basis of the conflict. As both insider and outsider, the ethnographer is well situated to identify possible avenues for conflict resolution between local groups and external agencies, be they private or governmental (see Adams, 2011).

## APPLICATIONS OF ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS TO TOURISM STUDIES

As noted above, ethnographic research strategies yield rich and nuanced understandings of how people make sense of and engage with the world. In this regard, they are

valuable for understanding tourists' perspectives on their travel experiences, as well as on the broader ritualized meanings of their voyages vis-á-vis the rest of their lives. Nelson Graburn observes that this methodological emphasis on meaning "might not reveal much about . . . [tourists'] spending, demonstration effects or other measures of impact; nor does it necessarily relate to their satisfaction or the likelihood of their return, though it might. More importantly, meaning has to do with the feelings experienced and the values expressed by temporary travelers, almost always in relation to their whole . . . lives" (Graburn, 2002, p. 30). In this regard, ethnographic methods have been used by tourism scholars to illuminate how travel experiences can impact tourists' perceptions of other nations as well as prompt reassessments, reaffirmations or transformations of their own personal, religious, or national identities. For example, Shaul Kelner's (2010) study of Israeli birthright tourism draws on his participant observation on homeland tours for Jewish young adults that are sponsored by North American Jewish organizations and the State of Israel. These free tours are designed to foster diaspora Jewish engagement with Israel. In addition to participating in these tours, Kelner also spent time with guides and observed guiding program activities. As Kelner concludes, although these diaspora tours may not necessarily change young travelers' identities, they can foster emotionally compelling, embodied experiences that "re-ground" these young visitors' process of self-creation. The on-tour activities "encourage non-Israeli Jews to strike symbolic roots in a place where they do not live . . . through their actions they inscribe place onto self and self onto place, recreating their understandings of themselves and of Israel in the meeting of the two" (Kelner, 2010, p. 198).

Tourism scholars have also drawn on ethnographic methods to examine on-the-ground dimensions of tourism's relationship to nation-building and nationalism (see Adams, 1998; Babb, 2011; Bruner, 2001; Cohen, 2010; Edensor, 1998; Sanchez and Adams, 2008). For example, the differences between the practices and orientations of domestic and international tourists in Asia were seldom addressed by scholars and planners until several researchers engaged in participant observation and chronicled their varying interpretations of what they were seeing. Nelson Graburn's field research in Japan (1983) prompted the realization that the language and framing of domestic tourism in Japan was quite different from that of international tourism. Likewise, my participant observation in Indonesia's ethnic tourism destination of Tana Toraja identified and examined the different framings and meanings underlying domestic and international tourists' visits to this Indonesian hinterland region. Whereas the Indonesian government frames domestic tourism in terms of reaffirming regional and national inter-ethnic ties (contrasting with the ways in which international travelers' visits are framed), my participant observation revealed that government visions of building cross-cutting ties via domestic tourism were often complicated and confounded by prior inter-ethnic or religious tensions. In short, despite governmental framing of tourism as an avenue for strengthening the ties between the diverse groups within the nation, domestic tourism does not automatically build inter-ethnic bridges: sometimes it reignites long-simmering tensions (Adams, 1998).

In a similar vein, several tourism scholars have engaged in participant observation at Indonesia's Taman Mini ethnic theme park and elaborated on the complex ways in which this park, designed to foster nation-building and nationalism, challenges some of our key tourism theories (Bruner, 2005; Hitchcock, 1998). For instance, Bruner notes

that when Toba Batak tourists visit the Batak section of this ethnic theme park in their nation's capital, they do not go with Urry's "tourist gaze" seeking experiences different from those of their everyday life, but rather they go to see "what they know they are. They do not discover the other but rather witness a performance of themselves in a different context" (Bruner, 2005, p. 227). In this sense, then, ethnographic methods have effectively enabled us to better understand how tourism can foster "self-construction".

More broadly, ethnographic field methods are well suited for shedding light on tourism's role in shaping particular communities and cultures, insights that are less likely to be culled from questionnaires and surveys. For instance, Hazel Tucker's (2003) long ethnographic research in Goreme, Turkey revealed some of the new cultural forms arising out of encounters between tourists and locals: her findings challenge the dominant stereotype of tourism as a force that uniformly disempowers locals: rather, relationships between insiders and outsiders are constantly negotiated. With regards to tourism and gender relations, Tucker notes that romantic relationships between tourist women and local men are creating new expanded ideas about gender relations in the village (Tucker, 2003). Likewise, Maribeth Erb's long-term participant observation on the Eastern Indonesian island of Flores enabled her to observe, document, and interpret local debates surrounding the rebuilding of traditional houses with an eye to the potential to attract tourists. This methodological approach led Erb to understand that these processes were not instances in which the tourism was "destroying" traditional culture, but rather instances in which interactions with foreign tourists (as well as foreign priests and the state) were introducing new yardsticks for authenticity and enabling local people to make claims for different kinds of authenticity in different contexts (Erb, 1998, 2009). Still other scholars have used ethnographic methods to document the reorganization of local labor, artistic meanings, and conceptions of traditions when ethnic crafts and music are marketed to tourists (see Causey, 2003; Cohen, 2000; Forshee, 2001).

Ethnographic data gathering methods have also offered rich illustrations of how tourism transforms or reaffirms ethnic and racial hierarchies (see Adams, 2006; Guerrón-Montero, 2006; Stronza, 2008; van den Berghe, 1994). For example, Pierre van den Berghe's pioneering ethnographic research in Peru enabled us to recognize that tourism is always superimposed on pre-existing structures of ethnic hierarchies (van den Berghe, 1980). Van den Berghe's more recent fieldwork on ethnic tourism in San Cristobal, Mexico, revealed a tri-partite tourism arena comprised of wealthier foreign and urban Mexican tourists, predominantly *ladino* middlemen who tend to reap the greatest financial gains from tourism and indigenous Maya "tourees" who are the objects of tourists' attention (van den Berghe, 1994). Ultimately, his fieldwork underscores the ways in which ethnic divisions of labor can underlie and sustain tourism in various destinations.

Finally, ethnographic methods are also particularly well suited for gathering data on delicate subjects such as money. For instance, in her study of how tourism employment has transformed Bulgarian women's lives, Kristen Ghodsee recounts how her attempts to gather income information via surveys yielded worthless data. It was only via participant observation and informal interviews that she came to fully appreciate the inappropriateness of the questions that framed her earlier survey (Ghodsee, 2005, pp. 66–7). Likewise, while Ghodsee did not feel comfortable asking direct questions about illicit sources of tourism-related income, participant observation and informal conversations

enabled her to learn about income-supplementing strategies of over-charging and short-changing foreign tourists (Ghodsee, pp. 72–3).

One last advantage of ethnographic research methods is worth underscoring before turning to review the limitations of this methodology. As some scholars have noted, the "multi-stranded" nature of ethnographic research (which combines long-term participant observation with interview, archival and other data) forms a solid basis for triangulation and enables researchers to systematically compare data culled from various sources (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1991, p. 24). Hammersley and Atkinson underscore that "this avoids the risks that stem from reliance on a single kind of data: the possibility that one's findings are method-dependent" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1991, p. 24).

## ADVANTAGES AND LIMITATIONS OF ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH METHODS

Ethnographic research methods have potential value for policy formulation and planning that has yet to be fully tapped. First, ethnographic work is particularly adept at giving voice to minorities and at mapping out competing regimes of power at tourism sites. Tapping into this sort of data early can result in the formulation of policies that are more likely to circumvent inequities and conflict at tourism sites slated for development. More generally, ethnography produces a more textured appreciation of the varied responses to prospective tourism development projects in any given community.

Second, ethnographic research methods can also yield insights into the underlying dynamics of on-going clashes at established tourism destinations and this information is valuable for wise policy formulation. Ethnographic research demands that one be attentive to the diverse groups interacting in and beyond the tourist sites, be they domestic tourists, foreign tourists, guides, hoteliers, crafts-makers, souvenir sellers, restaurant and bar employees, local residents, planners, tour organizers, transport workers, or travel writers. Ethnography can shed light on the different visions each of these groups has of a tourist site, and how these visions may clash (see Bruner, 1993, 1996; Notar, 2006). For instance, Bruner's study of tourism at Ghana's slave castles revealed dramatic contrasts between Ghanaian visions of the slave castles as a route to development, African-American tourists' conception of the slave castles as sacred pilgrimage space that should not be commercialized, and other foreign or domestic tourists interest in the slave castles due to their historic roles as other things (past Dutch and British colonial headquarters, site where an important Asante king was imprisoned in 1896, etc). As Bruner (1993) observed, conflicts and frustrations are aroused when different claims about the significance of the space were made simultaneously. His study points towards the challenge faced by planners: how to represent dynamic spaces with long histories to vastly different audiences in such a way that all (or at least many) are satisfied? Via the ethnographic data, however, planners can gain clues as to how to avoid some of the pitfalls inherent in this challenge.

Third, ethnographic research can potentially point towards avenues for bridge-building between diverse stake-holders in touristic settings. Ethnography's orientations towards the broader cultural and political contexts in which tourism unfolds means we

engage in participant observation not only *in* the arenas of tourism enterprise, but well *outside* the areas directly tied to the tourism industry. And, sometimes, we find that avenues for tourism conflict resolution lie in spaces and institutions that, on the surface, have little connection to tourism, per se. For example, as part of my field research in the California mission tourism town of San Juan Capistrano (Adams, 2011) I began attending a weekly "coffee chat" that had begun as a journalist's short-cut for gathering local news stories. These open café gatherings soon blossomed into an arena that drew into dialogue both powerful and minority community members and called to mind Habermas's observations on the historic role of British coffee houses in fostering democratic civic engagement. On several occasions, the coffee chat became a forum for constructive tourism problem resolution. It is worth underscoring that the pivotal role of the coffee chat as an arena for bringing together diverse stakeholders in dialogue and ultimately resolving potentially explosive tourism-related conflicts could not have been uncovered easily without ethnographic fieldwork, since the coffee chat forum did not have any obvious relation to tourism. It is in these sorts of ways that the broader "community and beyond" scope of ethnographic research can help steer policy makers and planners towards unexpected new avenues for fostering constructive dialogue between diverse stakeholders in tourism sites.

There are, however, some limitations of this technique that are worth noting. First, ethnographic research is tremendously time-consuming. Policy makers cannot always wait a year for ethnographic data to be gathered and still more months for the researcher to analyse the massive amount of data produced by ethnographic research (for a fuller discussion of this critique, see Yin, 1989, pp. 21–2). Second, as with other qualitative methods, some feel that the "danger of researcher bias" inherent in ethnographic methods render them less appealing than statistical material or survey responses (Sandiford and Ap, 1998, p. 11). In short, some have critiqued ethnographic methods as a "soft" methodology (Phillimore and Goodson, 2004, pp. 3–4).[3] Third, perhaps ironically, ethnographic research's ability to produce rich, nuanced accounts of people's understandings of tourist sites has also been envisioned by some as one reason for its limitations for policy formulation (Filippucci, 2009, p. 321). As Paola Filippucci notes, the diverse narratives we collect in tourist settings can often reveal contradictory perspectives that are "impossible to translate into recommendations to public policy agencies charged with developing 'local' heritage" (Filippucci, 2009, p. 319). Finally, still others have critiqued ethnographic research methods as "too specific to be replicated or applied generally" (Alder and Alder, 1994, cited in Hollinshead, 2004).

## FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

While efforts to accurately predict the future are notoriously difficult due to the many variables on which such predictions are based (Prideaux, 2002, p. 221), some recent developments have indicated new directions in the evolution of ethnographic methods that are pertinent to tourism studies. These include social scientists' growing recognition of the ways in which local sites are tethered to distant regions of the globe, new computer technology, new tweakings of ethnographic methods themselves, and increasing expectations on the part of local stakeholders to have a say in tourism development policies.

This section briefly addresses the potential ramifications of these developments for ethnographic field research methods in tourism studies.

In recent years, scholars have become increasingly cognizant of the ramifications of accelerated globalization for tourism studies: the communities tourism ethnographers study are tethered to global flows, and that tourists are not the only ones to be moving in and out of these destinations: local guides go for training sessions outside the region (see Salazar, 2010), romances with foreign tourists may result in tourates relocating to distant nations (Brennan, 2004), traders move ethnic art wares and tourist souvenirs across great distances (see Forshee, 2001), and even tourism campaigns and slogans travel the globe. In tandem with these developments, tourism ethnographers have grappled with new methodological challenges and have begun what some have dubbed a "post-local" era, casting their ethnographic lens to multiple locales to foster richer, more complex understandings of the workings of tourism in our hyper-global era. One pioneering example of this new development in qualitative research methods is Noel Salazar's multi-sited ethnography, which draws on two years of what he terms "glocal ethnography" (Salazar, 2011) to examine tour guide training and performance in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, and Arusha, Tanzania. Salazar's ethnography is deeply rooted in the destinations he considers and offers rich documentation of how tour guides' practices, narratives, and aspirations are informed by globally circulating "imaginaries" of the past and the future (Salazar, 2010). Drawing on multi-sited ethnographic research techniques to study the local-to-global dynamics of tourism processes, as well as the power trail of touristic systems is clearly a productive avenue for future research.

New technological developments, in tandem with a global economic and ecological crisis, also have implications for the evolution of ethnographic research methods suitable for studying new tourism trends. As Prideaux (2002) has noted, future tourists may be alternating between real and cyber experiences. In his words, "harsh political and/or economic realities may force a retreat of the tourist to more confined areas, and the taste for real-time travel may be restricted or substituted by cybertourism experiences" (p. 324). Such a scenario poses new challenges for adapting ethnographic research techniques to the highly individualized and personalized experiences of this new genre of tourism. Some scholars have begun exploring the methodological terrain of virtual ethnography, or netography (see Hall, 2011; Kozinets, 2010). In addition, one possible avenue for adapting ethnographic methods to fit these new forms of tourism is that of auto-ethnography. Auto-ethnography is a newer form of ethnographic research that draws on the researcher's own experience as a source of data. This approach has already been productively applied to tourism topics by various scholars (see Morgan and Pritchard, 2005; Walsh and Tucker, 2009). For instance, Morgan and Pritchard (2005) have examined their uses and narratives of their own collections of tourist arts amassed over lifetimes of travel, ultimately shedding light on the relations between material things, tourism, and constructions of self-identity. It is likely that future tourism researchers will be increasingly adding auto-ethnography to their methodological toolkit.

Finally, in an era where local communities are increasingly expecting to have a say in tourism planning decisions that will impact their lives, a growing number of tourism researchers are drawing on ethnographic research methods to facilitate this process (see Cohen, 2010; Jamal and Stronza, 2009; Stronza, 2005, 2010). For instance, Amanda Stronza (2005) has engaged in participatory ethnographic research (what some term

collaborative ethnographic methods) in a Peruvian Amazon ecotourism destination to shed light on and help steer planning in the direction that local stakeholders envision for ecotourism development. This is a promising path for future tourism scholars, as insights culled from collaborative ethnographic research methods can lead us to find ways to skirt the classic problems by tourism development, yielding more contented stakeholders and tourists.

## NOTES

1. This expression derives from the British philosopher Gilbert Ryle's lectures (1971). Norman Denzin (1989) further explicated the scope of thick description in qualitative ethnographic research, delineating and offering examples of 11 genres of thick description. For a full exploration of the origins and evolution of this concept in qualitative research, see Ponterotto (2006).
2. Hollinshead (1991) offers a discussion and adjustment of Geertz's vision of ethnography for tourism scholars.
3. However, qualitative researchers would rebut that surveys are also susceptible to researcher bias and that fully objective research is a cultural myth, not a reality.

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*Edited by*

Larry Dwyer

*University of New South Wales, Australia*

Alison Gill

*Simon Fraser University, Canada*

Neelu Seetaram

*Bournemouth University, UK*

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