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Negotiating Intersubjectivity as Methodology: Ethnographic Fieldwork and the Co-Production of Knowledge

Brandon D. Lundy
Kennesaw State University, egrove_bdl@maildrop.cc

Mark Patterson
Kennesaw State University, egrove_mpx@maildrop.cc

Alex O'Neill
egrove_aox@maildrop.cc

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Negotiating Intersubjectivity as Methodology: Ethnographic Fieldwork and the Co-Production of Knowledge

Brandon D. Lundy, Mark Patterson, and Alex O'Neill

Abstract

How is ethnographic knowledge fashioned and impressions managed during power-laden, discursive interview events? This chapter examines ethnographic encounters with foreign investors, development workers, and government officials in Guinea-Bissau as a way to explore intersubjectivity as a site of meaning making. These encounters take place in negotiated spaces where the dynamics of the encounter are fluid and contextually sensitive. Through an analysis of the co-production of knowledge, social researchers can begin to examine intersubjectivity within the ethnographic interview as both a shared resource and a potential liability for ethnographic interlocutors. This chapter highlights some of the methodological implications of negotiating and evaluating intersubjectivity.

Introduction

Ethnographic fieldwork is an encounter between the researcher(s) and study "subject(s)" as they codify knowledge deemed worthy of documentation (cf. Bellér-Hann, Ildikó, and Sharshenova 2011; Murtha 2013; Pels 2000; Salinas 2013; White 1999). Deciding, both directly and indirectly, what goes on the record and what remains off, is what we refer to here as *intersubjectivity*. Through an

examination of this encounter, social scientists can analyze how we produce knowledge within the ethnographic interview (Marteinson 2006). The postmortem deconstruction of these events provides insights into the discursive act at the meta-layer. As a methodological technique, regarding intersubjectivity as a form of impression management that both makes and masks knowledge provides inroads into multiple levels of understanding including the cultural (i.e., Where and why is this encounter taking place?), the individual (i.e., Who are we and what are we doing/making?), and the interactional (i.e., Why are we talking about this, in this way, at this moment?).

The inspiration for this chapter emerged after thinking about the challenges we encountered as researchers during the consent process for a series of interviews and surveys with entrepreneurs throughout the capital city of Bissau in Guinea-Bissau, West Africa, during January 2014. Protective of their busy schedules and cautious in their willingness to disclose operational details about their businesses, each prospective study participant required clear, straightforward assurances of our aims and objectives, an explanation of why we were interested in their businesses, an introduction about where we came from, and vigorous guarantees that we were not affiliated with the state apparatus. Satisfactorily exposing our honest intentions sometimes took upwards of 30 minutes per meeting, while the face-to-face interaction itself was often completed in less than 15 minutes.

Here, we seek to understand how the ongoing process of building rapport seeps into all aspects of the ethnographic encounter and how this might be considered as a factor in the co-production of knowledge between interlocutors. By reviewing interview vignettes, newly exposed meta-data can provide alternative or additional information, making the overall interpretation of the interview and survey data more robust, rigorous, and valid.

This chapter is divided into four parts. First, the theoretical framing is provided to show how ethnographic encounters can be reexamined taking into account the additional layers of intersubjective ethnographic knowledge co-production. Second, five interview vignettes are briefly presented as examples of ethnographic knowledge co-production. Third, these vignettes are referenced to expose and explore some of the backstage negotiations resulting largely from the rapport-building processes begun during the consent process. The chapter concludes by suggesting how intersubjectivity serves as a bridge between the practice of ethnography and the theory of the co-production of knowledge by considering what intersubjectivity as methodology means for anthropological inquiry.

Intersubjectivity and the Co-production of Knowledge

This chapter builds off of previous engagements with intersubjectivity and the co-production of knowledge by scholars such as Michael Jackson (1998; 2002) by considering a single event, the ethnographic interview, as a way to establish a validity construct through the *triangulation of perspectives*. In other words, there are multiple levels of data, meta-data, meaning, and understanding that can be gleaned from a single interview encounter by deconstructing the event as a communicative act between people. As a point of departure, we primarily focus our analysis on Jackson's first notion of intersubjectivity as "'mutually arising'—as relational and variable" (1998, 7). We do this by presenting interactional vignettes, what we are calling here "events," to deconstruct the processes of rapport building, meaning making, meaning masking, and where these overlap and intersect. While equally as salient to discussions of ethnographic intersubjectivity, treatments of affectivity and ethics (Jackson's second point of departure) and "the dialectic of subject and object" as "a reciprocal

and analogical relationship . . . between persons and a world of ideas, attributes, and things that are held in common" (1998, 7) must wait for future analyses.

Reflexive, interpretive, phenomenological, and hermeneutic accounts of ethnographic fieldwork have led to the creation of a methodological canon of qualitative investigations that reach beyond traditional empiricism (Bensa 2006; Bensa and Fassin 2002; Borneman 2002, 2011; Denzin 1997, 2001; Denzin and Lincoln 2008; Gable 2010; Gebauer and Wulf 1995; Lassiter 2000, 2001, 2008; Lassiter and Campbell 2010; Meyer and Pels 2003; Pina-Cabral 2009, 2010, 2013; Strohm 2012; Ulin 1992, 2002, 2004, 2007; White 2011; Wulf 2014). These "places of encounters" are recognized as analyzable spaces worthy of investigation in and of themselves. "Each person is at once a subject for himself or herself—a *who*—and an object for others—a *what*. And though individuals speak, act, and work toward belonging to a world of others, they simultaneously strive to experience themselves as world makers" (Jackson 1998, 8, emphasis in the original).

For example, Quetzil E. Castañeda (2005) challenged the fieldworker to "interrogate the complicated entanglements of subjects and objects" (97). He did not decenter ethnographic fieldwork as practice, but instead shone theoretical light on the fieldwork dynamic to "create new understandings, perspectives, and uses" (2005, 98). This chapter begins to unpack the layers of complex meaning that are evoked and invoked during ethnographic encounters by providing a few samples from interview data on Guinea-Bissau and how these events unfolded to elicit shared and valued knowledge.

According to Paul Rabinow (2009, 6), the act of anthropological inquiry remains an area underexplored. We, therefore, reexamine our ethnographic data from foreign investors, entrepreneurs, development workers, and government officials collected in the small

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state of Guinea-Bissau in West Africa as processual acts of both *knowledge making* and *knowledge masking*. Considering the ethnographic encounter as dialect illuminates potential methodological underpinnings of anthropological inquiry as communicative and power-laden (Gusterson 1997; Nader [1969] 1974; Ortner 2010). What is shared during an interview is observable, fixable, and transportable through the ethnographic act. What remains unspoken and undocumented is a potential for future engagement, a shared recognition of the individual's agency to remain silent, or an unclaimed byproduct of the interaction, purposefully withheld or hegemonically unnoticed.

The theoretical model advanced in this argument, then, is built on sociality, subjectivity, and temporality. Our innate ability and desire to think and act socially both as a form of cultural identity and actual social relationships have been described in the anthropological canon as "ways of being and ways of belonging" played out on a socio-cultural field (Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004, 1008; see also Bourdieu 1977; Leichtman 2013, 41). An unfortunate result of this social inclusion, however, is the possibility of exclusion. Alterity, in the phenomenological tradition, refers to that which contrasts with identity construction allowing for a unique human ability to distinguish between self and not-self, which therefore leads to the imagining of an existence of alternative viewpoints (Fabian 1983; Fanon 2004; Said 1978; Taussig 1993).

Both alterity and empathy have important roles to play in the intersubjective encounter, with both parties judging, exerting influence, and trying to come to an understanding with and over the other. For the philosopher Edmund Husserl, intersubjectivity was about mutuality (not simply an attribution of intentions), bringing interlocutors in line or reaching a shared and potentially accessible lifeworld through empathy (Duranti 2010, 19-21). Therefore,

intersubjectivity does not emerge out of interaction but instead is the possibility of realizing such interactions through actual or trace behaviors. According to Alessandro Duranti, "intersubjectivity [is] a fundamental dimension of human experience and human sociability. . . . When properly understood, intersubjectivity can constitute an overall theoretical framework for thinking about the ways in which humans interpret, organize, and reproduce particular forms of social life and social cognition" (2010, 17). Intersubjectivity is about the possibility of reaching understanding, not necessarily completely achieving it.

Intersubjectivity, as defined above, becomes the lens to view ethnographic encounters. But what seems to be missing from Duranti's exposition of Husserl's conception of "We-relationships" (Schutz 1967) is how these engagements account for power. To clarify this point in her own argument, Mara A. Leichtman (2013, 38) drew on Ann Tsing's concept of "friction" that she defined as "the awkward, unequal, unstable, and creative qualities of interconnection across difference" (2005, 4; see also Beuving 2006).

In order to develop an understanding of intersubjectivity as it relates to power relations, we must also consider the root concept, subjectivity. According to Michel Foucault, "It is not the activity of the subject of knowledge that produces a corpus of knowledge, useful or resistant to power, but power-knowledge, the process and struggles that traverse it and of which it is made up, that determines the forms and possible domains of knowledge" (Foucault 1977, 28; see also Foucault 1980). In other words, "the subject is a reflexive human being who, through thinking, constitutes both the objectifying [externalizing] and subjectifying [internalizing] modes of acting, and is constituted by them" (Skinner 2013, 909). Subjectivity links control and dependence (i.e., subjecting oneself to the will of others through consent or force) with self-identity and self-knowledge (Skinner 2013,

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918). Exerting this power in the ethnographic encounter can result in shared knowledge and understanding, a type of consensus building between interlocutors, or it can lead to mistrust, apprehension, withholding, and manipulation. In sum, subjectivity is one's ability to hold multiple power-laden perspectives emergent out of experiences and practices that inform one's lifeworld (Heller 1996). Subjectivity is fashioned from a feedback loop between the individual and the social environment. Self–other formation is an ongoing activity that one cannot remove from temporality without setting up a sentimental and anachronistic lament over whether knowledge can be produced at all (Maskens and Blanes 2013; McHugh 1989).

Lastly, encounters occur in time and space. Events change the subject by being inscribed; they are written down, thought and rethought, interpreted and reinterpreted, forgotten and remembered, discussed and ignored, revealed, remodeled, revised, reissued, and replayed. Simultaneity and then simulacra help us engage with that which has taken place—an event that corresponds with a reality. "Intersubjective time has two meanings, however: shared experience in time, and shared temporal frameworks used to make communication intersubjectively significant" (Birth 2008, 4; see also Fabian 1983, 30–31). Intersubjectivity must establish and reestablish temporal frameworks between interlocutors. We do this by co-creating shared and fixable reference points in time and space. These referents become important parts of the ethnographic encounter as it relates to intersubjectivity as a methodology.

In sum, the proposed theoretical framing employs Husserl's "we-relationships" (i.e., sociality), Foucault's "power-knowledge" (i.e., subjectivity), and Fabian's "coevalness" (i.e., temporality) to explain a form of knowledge production and understanding related to the intersubjective ethnographic interview. We triangulate these perspectives to expose how we go about making ethnographic

knowledge with layers of meaning about our subjects, our contexts, and ourselves.

Five Ethnographic Vignettes

We present the following five interview excerpts to illustrate intersubjectivity as it occurs in ethnographic knowledge co-production. These five interview events were selected to demonstrate different aspects of intersubjectivity as discussed in the framing.

These interviews are from a 2014 month-long research trip to Guinea-Bissau in West Africa. The objective of our research project was to survey the economy, with a particular focus on foreign direct investment and entrepreneurship. A total of 153 formal surveys of commercial enterprises and 11 semi-structured interviews with government officials, business leaders, and non-governmental organization management were carried out in January and February. These surveys and interviews took place in ten different business districts within the capital city of Bissau as well as on the coastal island of Bubaque and in the northern town of Sao Domingos along the border with Senegal. The vignettes all come from the interviews in which the negotiated interactions were less formalized and therefore needed more finesse to socially traverse for both the researchers and interviewees.

The first interview to be discussed took place in the United States in February 2014, just after our return from Bissau. It was with the president of a $30-billion private holdings company, which was in the process of trying to establish a partnership with the government of Guinea-Bissau through the country's acting president. The second interview was with the managing director and son of the owner of a large, privately held transnational corporation with 16 companies located in Africa and Spain. They dealt in groceries, construction, food distribution, hospitality and catering, import/exports,

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maritime logistics, pharmaceuticals, real estate development, and wine and beverages. Their first foray into the Bissau economy was in 2007 with the production and distribution of water, soda, and beer. Within a few short years, they were major private foreign direct investors in multiple arenas of Guinea-Bissau's economy. The third interview was with a port official and director of a community-based NGO in the capital city of Bissau. The fourth interview vignette is from a Lebanese businessperson, the first in Bissau to assist the government with privatization efforts and the liberalization of the economy in the 1980s, more than a decade after independence. The final interview was with a renowned author and businessperson who established the first technology-based firm in the country.

These interviews all took place within a month of each other during a period of political uncertainty in Guinea-Bissau. On April 12, 2012, a military coup d'état occurred, two weeks before the second round of presidential elections between the run-off candidates, former Prime Minister Carlos Gomes Júnior and former President Kumba Ialá. Shortly thereafter, a third-party candidate, Manuel Serifo Nhamadjo, was appointed by the National Transitional Council to serve as the interim president until new elections could take place. President Nhamadjo was still serving as the acting president of Guinea-Bissau at the time of the interviews. These interviews were selected since each interviewee occupied important public and private positions within Guinea-Bissau's political economy. The interview relationships were unique and complex, fashioned out of specific sets of empirical and commercial considerations, existing and newly developing personal and professional relationships, reputational perceptions, time constraints, socio-cultural backgrounds, and environmental factors. These interviews were also selected to represent both foreign and domestic interests. Two were from large, privately-held transnational corporations, one was tied to an

Intergovernmental Organization (IGO) with hopes of operating in Guinea-Bissau, and the other was already doing so. Another was a long-term foreign investor who held Guinean citizenship and began investing in the country as soon as the economy began to liberalize. The other two interviewees were Guinean citizens, one a businessperson and the second a government official and representative of a local Nongovernmental Organization (NGO).

Interview 1

On February 18, 2014, we interviewed Jason, the President of Market Holdings,[1] about his company's interests in Guinea-Bissau. He began with a description of their operations: "We've evolved from a think tank to this corporation that serves as a commercial capital manager for [an] IGO that we seek to fund on behalf of, and that is the arm that we utilize to touch the Guinea-Bissaus of the world." Through the initiatives of the IGO, Market Holdings had access to and partial sovereignty in 33 countries, 25 of which were in Africa. They held $30 billion in collateral, employed more than 30 people in four major US cities, and had several international offices.

Jason was careful in his description of the firm's planned operations in Guinea-Bissau:

> So what we are doing is we are [proposing] ascribing a safety fee, $5 per cubic meter, that is to apply for each [shipping] container. We'll take that safety fee, it is maybe $200 for these big groups per container, and that is not cost prohibitive, but we will take that safety fee, accelerate the revenue of that for ten years, and then we will profit share that. We have the ability, because of

[1] All names of people and organizations provided are pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality.

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> the financial algorithms we have, and the relationships we have with Zurich and our capital partners, that we can feel comfortable bringing ten years of revenue and sharing that with the country [Guinea-Bissau]. It is not coming from their treasury. The money is not coming from their constituents. It is coming from the shippers of dangers across the world and we are helping them to make the world a safer place. That is how we can bring foreign direct investment into Guinea-Bissau.

Jason commented on Market Holdings operations in Nigeria, Burundi, Guinea Conakry, Mali, and the Congo, describing their business model as "fearless." His use of the word emphasized the perceived risks from operating in certain countries such as Guinea-Bissau where the political context was uncertain.

Simultaneously, Jason worked to relate interpersonally during the interview, for example, by referencing a popular film:

> Are you familiar with the BCCI [Bank of Credit and Commerce International] bank scandal of the 1980s? They made a movie about it, the IBBC, *The International* with Clive Owen. They say the ultimate goal in any conflict is not the conflict itself; it is the debt it creates. It is a system of control. The World Bank did it, partially because they do not want to cede that control. Because, once there is debt there, you have that control. So once we have the debt, then we can force the various sanctions, we are not necessarily worried after that because our relationship with Guinea-Bissau is sovereign, or other countries are sovereign, and that will extend beyond a president. So we have an interest in furthering our relationship with Guinea-Bissau.

Jason's comment about *The International* and the World Bank play into the control that he and his company intend to use and keep once they affiliate. This theme of control reappears later in the interview. In a revelatory moment of candor, Jason mentioned corruption and development synthetically: "To get people to listen to us, we have to give them money. That is the bottom line. People, you know, you can say, hey, I have humanitarian instruments, but, if you don't line their pockets up, they are not going to listen to you." He also alluded to the importance of temporality: "And that fear is there. That $5 per square foot, that is too much. But do you know the cost of money in ten years. Present value calculation of the money that we are giving ten years from now. The *present cost of future* money is exorbitant" (emphasis ours). The second interview was with the head of a similar privately held transnational company, although this foreign corporation had already made significant inroads into Guinea-Bissau's economy beginning in 2007, and by 2014, it had significant investments throughout the country.

Interview 2

Raul introduced himself in Portuguese as the son of the owner of Global Partners. Raul was of medium height with dark hair, blue eyes, and grew dark stubble on his face. The young, well-educated businessperson was dressed in a plaid, pressed shirt and dark jeans, and his demeanor was "all business." We approached him for an interview without having first established any prior contact. We proceeded through a security gate before reaching an English-speaking office manager from India.

While the structure was new, we were told that they had been operating in Guinea-Bissau since 2007, although five more businesses had been added since 2012. Raul agreed to give us 30 minutes for our interview. From initial contact until the interview was completed,

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our attempts to elicit company-specific information regarding their Guinea-Bissau holdings were adeptly managed, as one fieldnote excerpt demonstrates:

> The young businessperson asked if we spoke Spanish, French, or Portuguese but admitted that he spoke "some English." He called the Indian office manager into his office to assist with translation and proceeded to read over the entire consent form on the back of the survey while we explained the purpose of the research project. Raul asked to be "off-the-record" and did not consent to a recording device [although he did give us permission to take notes]; he was hesitant to answer questions without the consent of his father. . . . Raul explained that his father sought out small countries with populations fewer than one million where natural resources were readily available. The building where the interview was taking place employed approximately 100 people of various nationalities, including Indian, Romanian, Portuguese, and Bissau-Guinean. He explained that there were no security issues contrary to belief of worldwide news that focused on the negative aspects in Guinea-Bissau politics; he never felt threatened by the public, although, there was a security gate and attended guardhouse next to the courtyard gate entrance.

Upon completion of this interview, we were conflicted about how "successful" it had been. On the one hand, we were satisfied that we had been granted access to the person in charge of Global Partner's Guinea-Bissau operations. On the other hand, the information that was forthcoming was carefully released with no specific details on business dealings, profits, or ground-level logistics related

to operating a multi-million-dollar private corporation in a politically volatile environment. In other words, there was a great deal of knowledge-masking regarding sensitive business operations. In summary, my geographer colleague opined, "I was also surprised that we were able to see Raul. I figured we would end up making an appointment to come back. . . . Given how many projects they had going on, I was pleasantly surprised at how much time he gave us. . . . [However,] he was quite matter-of-fact in responding to our questions. At times I felt like everything he said could be looked up in one of the company's annual reports. He only mentioned the projects that were successful."

Interview 3

Our local research assistant originally set up the third interview, which was actually two separate interviews. Castigo was a friend and neighbor. We interviewed Castigo in relation to both his position in the privatized port of Bissau and his position as the local partner in a community-based NGO working on computer literacy and the raising and selling of chickens. We met Castigo on our very first day in Guinea-Bissau, since he picked us up at the airport. We were eventually introduced to his daughter and wife and had an excellent working relationship with him throughout our time in the country. In one fieldnote, we wrote:

> It proved very difficult to determine a day to interview Castigo even though we had socialized with him and his family several times throughout the month-long stay in Bissau. Perhaps it was the uncertainty of revealing information about the port in which he worked or the strange pressure that arises when business is mixed with friendship, but it took an entire month to finally sit down and

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> conduct the interview. . . . We were strangers who used this friendly connection to access knowledge that he had about the port.

The interview was eventually permitted to proceed as long as it was conducted off-site and confidentially.

To manage intersubjectivity, we formalized the interview by having a clear list of carefully translated and piloted questions. Castigo became the teacher tasked with instructing us, as outsiders, on the intricate details of port operations and the day-to-day management of his NGO.

Interview 4

Gaston was a jovial father figure whom we initially met in one of his places of business, a school supplies store, while he was changing over his inventory with the help of a French ex-pat friend from northern Guinea-Bissau. After our initial survey, we asked if he would be willing to participate in a follow-up interview. He agreed to coffee the following day.

On January 16, 2014, we met with Gaston across the street from our hotel at an expensive cafe. He was known by the staff that worked there; and in the end, they refused to accept my offer to pay, since Gaston was my senior. He narrated that he was originally from Lebanon, but he had traveled throughout West Africa, Europe, and had even spent time in the United States. He had a seemingly thriving business in the Gambia in the 1980s, which he shut down and now deeply regretted. At the time of the interview, he didn't seem overly optimistic about business prospects in Guinea-Bissau and was in the process of reducing his inventory throughout the capital.

Learning of my colleague's background as a geographer, Gaston regaled us with a tale of his first experience in the country when he

imported his first container full of stock from Europe and sold it in less than a day. As the first foreign investor in the country, his products were quite novel and in high demand. This potential was the primary reason he had decided to set up his life here. In the meantime, once his business was established in the early 1990s, he was approached by government officials about a map of Guinea-Bissau he had for sale. They entrusted him to go to France and purchase the license for the map so that they could reproduce it domestically. He had much to say about the bipolar nature of the country possibly stemming from its colonial legacy, independence movement, and subsequent political instability.

Gaston, due to his more than 25 years in the country, was able to provide a detailed account and analysis not only of his personal experiences in Guinea-Bissau, but he was also able to look more broadly at how the situation in the country had changed. He was eternally optimistic and simultaneously greatly disappointed in the direction the country was headed.

Interview 5

On January 27, 2014, we sat down with Gomes, the owner of a technology company, GuineTech. We had known each other since 2007, so we spent some time getting reacquainted. We spent almost an hour discussing his business and the current political situation in the country. For example, early in the interview we asked him, "Did the political situation in the country ever affect the business?" His response was quite telling of his frustrations: "Always. Just to give you an example, after 10 years we managed to build this building here. It was inaugurated in January [1998], and in June we had the civil war and most of the building was hit several times. The building was five months old; it was built in January and the war started in June. We really lost everything; we had a lot of computers. They were

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stolen and part of the building was destroyed." He continued, "You know, this is the only country in West Africa that has no connection to the fiber optics. There is no connection. Senegal has a connection, Gambia has a connection, and even Guinea-Conakry has a connection along with smaller countries like Sierra Leone. There is a lack of guidance with this . . . The government is the biggest obstacle in this country to development." When asked about the future of the country, Gomes said,

> Maybe, in three years I see the country getting out of this trouble. This is somewhat hard to say, but I believe in the country and I hope, there is more hope than belief, but I think we have done so much for ourselves that it is time to start re-thinking our entire lives and look at what we have done. See the mistakes and hopefully they will be able to guide us. Some of these guys that are campaigning now will ruin the country. Some of them deserve our confidence, but most of them do not.

This type of frank dialogue was possible for several reasons. First, we were speaking in English in his private office. Second, he was also an academic. Gomes therefore recognized the value in what we were there trying to do and trusted the research process and assurances of confidentiality. Third, we had an established relationship, which provided him an opportunity to speak candidly about the country's difficulties to someone who in his view was an "outsider."

Layers of Meaning: Several Stories Contained within a Single Event

The methodology advanced in this chapter, outlined above and used to reflect on the five interview vignettes, is not a new approach to social research. Originally advanced by Husserl (1964)

as phenomenology and subsequently adopted in anthropology by scholars like Michael Jackson (1998), engaging intersubjectivity continues to serve as a way to reveal alternative data points from the ethnographic interview process. We refer to this as *triangulation of perspectives*, which we believe helps show changes in the social environment that ultimately help us better understand rapport building and the co-production of knowledge(s) within a single shared event. In other words, one interview contains sub-surface information (*à la* Gregory Bateson) that can be exposed through several techniques employed both in real-time at the moment of interface and afterward during analysis and write-up. Some of these techniques shown above include using empathy, negotiated banter, self-disclosure and revelation, collaboration, purposeful or accidental knowledge masking, discourse analysis, and reflexivity, to name just a few. Ethnographers are well situated for this type of research agenda since communication and therefore tension is always present in fieldwork, and since the ethnographer's task is to shine a light on societal, cultural, and institutional norms, patterns, and processes.

In an effort to negotiate the research process and setting, many social scientists are trained to strip away the agency from their research subjects in the name of validity, accuracy, and consistency. Instead, subjective agency should be left intact and celebrated as a way to help enhance the research agenda as an ongoing effort to co-produce knowledge. By both recognizing and acknowledging our multifaceted intersubjectivity during ethnographic pursuits, researchers can consciously and critically work to better appreciate and comprehend the multiple perspectives of our counterparts and ourselves. Researchers need to be reflexive not just about themselves but also about their suppliers of cultural data and how and why it is extractable in particular ways at particular times. Anthropologists must observe, disclose, and attempt to explain what is brought to the

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encounter and how these social phenomena shape the subsequent co-produced ethnographic narrative.

For example, once people agree to be interviewed, they have a personal stake in the process of knowledge co-production and usually try to answer all the questions (Interviews 1 & 4). Interviews are social encounters. Therefore, people attempt to shape, manipulate, and sometimes undermine these encounters to gain what they think is to their advantage (Interviews 1 & 3). These underlying intentions help shape the interview dynamics and, ultimately, the outcomes. People are also a product of their biology, using rules of inference to aid recall and restructuring past events to remember them in more positive ways as a coping mechanism (Interviews 4 & 5). Influences on the interview process related to our social needs, contextual circumstances, and variable power dynamics tied to our identities lead ethnographers into complex and fluid social fields that must be explored and documented from a plethora of stances. Response effects and other "threats to validity" then become measurable indicators of negotiable identity through the acts of knowledge making and knowledge masking between the interviewee and interviewer (Aunger 2004). Response effects also reflect contextual shifts in the research setting. Therefore, understanding how knowledge is fashioned becomes a critical part of the ethnographic project.

Additionally, deference or acquiescence effects whereby people tell you what they think you want to know (Interviews 1 & 3), third-party-present effects in which social desirability influences responses (Interviews 2, 3, & 4), or the expectancy effect in which the researcher tends to help mold reactions (Interviews 1 & 5) all play a role in the information that is co-produced in an interview. In order to mitigate these "threats" to the validity of a research agenda, the social researcher is trained to employ a number of counteractive techniques such as: aided recall and the use of landmarks to assist

with improving memory accuracy; using various forms of triangulation among study participants, investigators, theories, or methods in the hopes of finding convergence among multiple and different sources of information; providing disconfirming evidence; disclosing assumptions through researcher reflexivity; checking and cross-checking accuracy of collected information with other participants; prolonged engagement in the "field"; collaboration with study participants; and the use of thick description to better capture the complexity of the social field.

What is argued in this chapter is that it is more realistic to manage these threats to validity instead of trying to reduce or eliminate them. These threats may in fact become revelatory when employed as techniques to aid in understanding the ethnographic interview process as a way to engage intersubjectivity and reveal layered data. By returning to the interview transcripts and fieldnotes, much more can be revealed about the ethnographic encounter.

With Raul of Global Partners, for example, surprise and the use of third parties was adopted on both sides. The entire five-person research team was brought to Raul's place of business in order to help gain access by emboldening the researchers in their attempt to "study up." Arriving unannounced was used to disrupt the standard power differentials between the manager of a multinational corporation and the investigators. Raul, however, countered by maintaining three levels of access, holding the interview in his office, refusing to allow the interview to be recorded, not providing specific information on the grounds that his father, the owner of Global Partners, would need to okay any specific transactions made "on-the-record," and by bringing in a third party of his own to help translate on his behalf. This example demonstrates how time, power, and sociality build intersubjectivity and help expose interactive data both in terms of what is said and what is not said.

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With Castigo of Community Partners, rapport was established by spending a great deal of time with him as well as by gaining initial access through previous contacts and friends. We worked to transform our relationship from collegial to a student–teacher dynamic in which he taught us about the port operations. This set up an effective arena for knowledge co-production.

In the fourth interview with Gaston, shared interests including maps and the English language were relied upon to establish rapport quickly. Empathy as a social phenomenon was clearly present during this interview in which Gaston unburdened himself over life choices that led him to specific business decisions resulting in his current circumstances. His was an informal conversation over coffee where the interview schedule was tabled and we allowed him a space to create his own life history.

Finally, Gomes was approached because of previous relations beginning in 2007. He had been visited during each return trip to Guinea-Bissau by the researcher. Therefore, rapport had already been established, and he was willing to take time to answer questions regarding his business and thoughts about the political situation with candor. The ongoing practice of maintaining expectations and obligations over time and space assisted in open and effective co-knowledge production.

In discussing these study findings, it becomes clear that a single event can be intersubjectively engaged with and subsequently can host multiple readings. This approach contains important methodological potential as an interpretivist and critical approach to the ethnographic interview, one that can show how ethnographic data is both co-produced and, at times, vigorously shielded from view.

Conclusion

As a methodology, we can collect data by observing and analyzing intersubjectivity because we have been trained to do so since birth. It is our need for sociality which allows us to make direct observations and interpretations about others' discourse and behaviors. Through awkward, somewhat undefined power relations, through the process of subjectification and objectification, tension emerges in the ethnographic encounter that exposes intersubjectivity where it was not as visible before. And it is in the moment of encounter that we embark on the creative process of co-knowledge production and knowledge masking, the outcome of which in combination with the intersubjective analysis enhances the validity of the ethnographic enterprise.

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