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THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF ACCESS IN ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

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This article uses social psychological theories to unify and expand current conceptions of access in ethnographic research—the process by which researchers gather data via interpersonal relationships with participants. Although this process is acknowledged as central to the practice of ethnography, understanding of access is fragmented. A review of the ethnographic methods literature, along with “tales of the field” from published ethnographies, suggests the appropriateness of reframing these segments in terms of social identity and self-presentation theories. This makes two major contributions to the ethnographic methods literature. First, it integrates present formulations of the access problem, many of which employ social psychological concepts but are not in explicit dialogue with the theories—or with each other. Second, it allows us to take a fresh perspective on current controversies in the field, complicating notions of power and identity while offering more specificity about how these processes operate in practice.

Keywords: *access; ethnography; self-presentation; social identity*

Sociological theory has been shaped in significant ways by ethnography—the method of long-term participant-observation (Babbie 1995). Although the importance of ethnographic research as a theory-building tool has been noted previously (e.g., Fine and Elsbach 2000), less attention has been paid to the ways in which ethnographic methodology might be an object of theoretical scrutiny in its own right. This is surprising because ethnographers face a data-gathering problem that would seem to lend itself to social scientific analysis: to conduct a study, researchers must first gain the cooperation and trust of participants by establishing interpersonal relationships with them (Berg 1998). This poses distinctive challenges to scholars employing ethnographic methods. But while researcher-participant relationships are acknowledged as the core of the knowledge-creation process in ethnography (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995), accounts of the processes underlying the formation of such relationships are fragmented into isolated segments within the ethnographic methods literature.

It remains unclear in the methods literature whether there is debate or agreement among the various approaches to access. This is because current perspectives rarely acknowledge one another, creating a

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disjointed set of concepts about researcher-participant relations. While some commonalities can be found, there is a notable absence of coherent or unified insight into the social structural processes that shape interactions in the field. This article contends that a conceptual bridge is needed to link these fragmentary perspectives and that the infrastructure for such an endeavor is available within social psychology. The task of this article is to make that infrastructure explicit.

The article will approach the problem of access from a symbolic interactionist perspective (Stryker 1968; Manis and Meltzer 1978; Hewitt 1994), drawing specifically on theories of social identity (Hogg and Abrams 1990; Tajfel and Turner 1979) and self-presentation (Schlenker 1986; Goffman 1959, 1956). Symbolic interaction provides the general model for understanding the interpersonal dynamics which are critical for ethnographers gathering data in the field.¹ Within this general framework, social identity and self-presentation theories address the specific mechanisms of researcher-participant relationships, focusing on the "whys" and "hows" of the process. To support and illustrate this approach to the access problem, the article will draw on both the methods literature and accounts of researcher-participant relationships found in published ethnographies.

Although a theoretical perspective can be valuable throughout the sociological enterprise of ethnography (Burawoy, Gamson, and Burton 1991), this article will not address all the areas in which social psychological theory could contribute to the practice and evaluation of this method. Rather, it will focus on the interpersonal challenges of gaining access and gathering data. This is because, as Marcus (1998, 127) notes, access is the defining activity of ethnography, a "regulative ideal" which defines the field and distinguishes its practitioners from others. Second, responses to the access problem are not only fragmented but a site of controversy among ethnographers, particularly in terms of power and identity issues. So a better understanding of the access process would make a significant impact on the field.

The importance of the access problem to ethnography, coupled with the fragmentation and controversy that have characterized the literature on the subject, suggests that researcher-participant relationships are due for a reconceptualization and integration. By framing the access process in social psychological terms, this article will offer a model of researcher-participant relations that is simultaneously more general and more specific than previous formulations. This is because, on one

hand, the processes posited in social psychological theory are not limited to certain types of people or relationships; the processes can generalize across ethnographic encounters, regardless of the characteristics of researchers, participants, or the relationships between them. In addition, the social psychological framework can consolidate the insights of previous work on the access problem and shed light on the vexed topic of power in researcher-participant relationships.

At the same time, the social psychological perspective can provide greater specificity about the processes at work in ethnographic encounters by identifying the mechanisms that govern relationships among interactants. Most of these mechanisms are already reviewed or implied within existing conceptualizations of the access problem. But the insights are scattered and could be better linked to one another and to general theoretical frameworks. Thus, the article will integrate existing work on the access problem by specifying these interactional processes and connecting them to the kind of meso-level theory for which a number of ethnographers have called (e.g., Maines 1983). As Hall (1987, 10) defines them, mesostructures help us "discern that social arrangements exist in and through processes that render them operational and operative. Structures cannot be understood apart from how they are enacted, but the structuring conditions the enactment."

The specificity offered by social psychological theories does not imply that ethnography can or should be fully "controlled," as in experimental work. A better understanding of social identity or self-presentation theories will not help ethnographers create a formulaic approach to participants. Instead, the goal is "informed improvisation," calling attention to the basic mechanisms of interpersonal relations that can help ethnographers engage skillfully and flexibly with new people and situations. Thus, the social psychological approach to access is consistent with the symbolic interactionist view of social structures as processual, contingent, and enacted (Hall 1987).

To develop theory on the access process, this article first reviews why researcher-participant relationships are so important and problematic for ethnographers. The second part of the article reviews the five current approaches to access in the methods literature. Section three outlines the symbolic interactionist model and proposes social identity and self-presentation theories as alternative frameworks for understanding the access problem, drawing out four implied empirical regularities about the process and illustrating them with "tales of the field" from

published ethnographies. Finally, section four summarizes the implications and considers areas for future study.

ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODOLOGY AND THE RESEARCHER PARTICIPANT RELATIONSHIP

WHY APPLY THEORY TO THE PROBLEM OF ACCESS?

One might ask what difference it makes whether we can specify how researcher-participant relationships take shape and influence data collection. Is it not enough to know that some researchers gain access to data through interpersonal relationships with participants, while others do not? The answer is no for several reasons. Evidence suggests that many ethnographic studies that have made major contributions to the field have narrowly avoided being derailed by the objections or resistance of participants (Johnson 1975). This includes studies such as Whyte's (1943) seminal research on Cornerville and other projects that will be reviewed below. In addition, due to the fragmentation and lack of dialogue among approaches to the access problem, many researchers find little assistance in the methods literature when developing strategies for approaching new research sites.

A conceptual bridge is needed to bring together the numerous insights of existing work on the access problem and to link them to more general social structural processes. This article argues that access in ethnographic research currently proceeds through a set of social psychological practices that, if made explicit, could provide the needed conceptual bridge. The intended contribution will be to use social psychological concepts—many of which are already implicit in the ethnographic methods literature—as a unifying meso-structure (Maines 1983) for understanding the basic social structural conditions that influence how access is enacted between researchers and participants.

ACCESS, POWER, AND CONTROVERSY

Another indication of the need to develop a more integrated meso-theory of access is the debate surrounding power relations between

researchers and participants. As Marcus writes, the process of gaining access to data through interpersonal relationships with participants is the defining experience for ethnographers—a “regulative ideal” (1998, 127) that delimits the collective identity of researchers in this field. Perhaps because the concept of access stands for so much, it is the subject of some controversy.

For example, current definitions of access are vexed by the problem of power. While earlier ethnographic writings portrayed researcher-participant relationships as cooperative, more recent scholarship has problematized access as a “motivated fiction” (Marcus 1998, 109) which obscures the exploitation of participants. The latter view regards participants as being manipulated into divulging information that can be used to reify and misrepresent them (Clifford 1983b).

A related set of problems have been raised about identity and power in the access process. Canonical formulations of researcher-participant relationships have usually assumed a white, male, or First World researcher interacting with native “others.” But this view of access has been perturbed by increasing numbers of nonwhite, female, and Third World researchers entering the field. Such “native ethnographers” make it difficult to speak of access in conventional terms, particularly when they study their own communities. Their work “blurs the subject/object distinction on which ethnography is conventionally based” (Gupta and Ferguson 1997a, 33), suggesting the need for reconceptualization of access in terms that are not limited by identity assumptions.

In general, both the power and identity critiques of researcher-participant interactions suggest that we need to allow access to be more complicated and nuanced than earlier formulations would suggest. Since many ethnographers now study people who are more powerful or privileged than they are, as well as their own “native” groups, the old models—subject/object or cooperation/exploitation—do not adequately describe the ethnographic encounter, if they ever did. However, allowing our conceptualizations of access to be “complicated and nuanced” does not have to mean that we accept fragmentation. The social psychological framework proposed in this article can provide a more coherent view of the access problem.

Although this reframing cannot fully resolve all the controversies surrounding access, it can respond to some of the most pressing critiques. For example, the social psychological approach can address

Marcus' point that "the inequality of power relations, weighted in favor of the anthropologist, can no longer be presumed" (1998, 121). This is because symbolic interaction theories regard power as a variable, contingent upon possession of symbolic resources. In this perspective, both researchers and participants are endowed with symbolic resources and engage in the negotiation of their respective identities. Social identity and self-presentation theories help us understand how the interactants in this process use their resources, as well as the meso-level structures that govern such engagements.

While these processes will be examined in more detail later in the article, it is worth noting here that the social psychological view calls attention to a dimension of power in researcher-participant relations that deserves more careful attention: the power of participants to define researchers in terms of categories that are meaningful to participants. In this part of the access process, participants often have the upper hand, acting as gatekeepers and defining the terms on which researchers can gather data. Within this general symbolic interactionist framework, social identity theory can contribute to our understanding of this process by focusing on the identity-enhancement objectives of participants, while self-presentation theory looks specifically at the call-and-response mechanisms of the negotiation.

The social psychological framework also responds to Gupta and Ferguson's (1997a and 1997b) call to complicate notions of identity in researcher-participant relations. Both social identity and self-presentation theories are grounded in the symbolic interactionist notion of the self as multifaceted and contextually based. That is, identity is not a static property of individuals, but negotiated in social interaction. As a result, there is no inherent conflict in this framework between being an ethnographer and a "native." In fact, this combination of identities would be seen as a potential asset within social identity and self-presentation theories: the more facets to one's identity, the greater number of others with which one can align. For example, in doing research on a complex organization, a "native ethnographer" may use the "native" facet of her identity (perhaps gender) to gain access to the secretarial staff, while using the "researcher" facet (professional credentials) to align with the executives.

Thus, taking a social psychological perspective on access can help ethnographers get beyond some of the limitations of previous conceptualizations of the problem, both in terms of fragmentation and

controversy. In some cases, this means reframing liabilities as potential assets; in other cases, it means identifying more clearly than before the ways in which the access process can be engaged more or less skillfully. Ultimately, a more self-conscious and informed engagement with social psychological theory can strengthen the authority and credibility of ethnographic research by helping researchers better understand the interpersonal processes in which they are engaged. Close attention to access provides valuable data-gathering opportunities (Horowitz 1986; Whyte 1984) and allows ethnographers to provide more detailed accounts of their methods for readers (Golden-Biddle and Locke 1993; Stoddart 1986).

ACCESS AS OPPOSED TO ENTRY OR RAPPORT

The importance of access as a sociological phenomenon is suggested by the proliferation of terms used to describe how researchers and participants negotiate the terms of their interaction in the field. The most common of these concepts are access, entry, and rapport. While the terms are often used interchangeably, this article will employ the term "access" because—unlike entry and rapport—access focuses attention on the social scientific goal of ethnography: access to information. As Glesne and Peshkin (1999) write,

Access is a process. It refers to your acquisition of consent to go where you want, observe what you want, talk to whomever you want, obtain and read whatever documents you require, and do all of this for whatever period of time you need to satisfy your research purposes. (p. 33)

In contrast, the term "entry" is commonly used to mean "getting in" (Johnson 1975, 52)—the initial act of entering the field or gaining permission from participants to start a study. "Rapport," on the other hand, refers to the quality of the researcher-participant relationship itself and is most often likened to friendship (Glesne and Peshkin 1999; Clifford 1983a). While friendship may affect access to information, it is not necessary and may even impede data-gathering (Horowitz 1986).

Furthermore, while access, entry, and rapport all involve interactive processes, access specifically involves negotiation for information—a process which must often be repeated throughout a study with many different participants (Shaffir and Stebbins 1991). Thus, while both

entry and rapport are worthy of study in their own right, the key sociological issues for the purposes of this article are the researcher-participant relationship and how it facilitates or impedes access to information—issues best captured by the term access.

PREVIOUS WORK ON THE ACCESS PROBLEM

Among a variety of approaches to the problem of access, one can discern five major genres, each characterized by distinct explanatory premises. These premises include “common sense,” anecdotes, checklists, role-playing, and exchange. While none of the five explicitly invoke social psychological theories, they do serve to establish researcher-participant relationships as a problem worth serious sociological attention. In addition, they are consistent with mechanisms postulated in theories of social identity (Hogg and Abrams 1990; Tajfel and Turner 1979) and self-presentation (Rao, Schmidt, and Murray 1995; Schlenker 1986; Goffman 1959, 1956). Indeed, this article will propose that the five approaches can be usefully integrated and reframed through social psychological theory, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the access process.

THE “COMMON SENSE” APPROACH

Some ethnographers view access as an extension of everyday social skills—a matter of “common sense” (Johnson 1975) that does not bear theoretical scrutiny. Since individuals use social psychological skills in everyday life, this construction of the problem is not altogether surprising. In addition, many ethnographers found that they, like Simmel’s “stranger” (1950), “often receive the most surprising openness—confidences which sometimes have the character of a confessional and which would be carefully withheld from a more closely related person” (p. 404). That is, merely by their appearance in the field, researchers can elicit a great deal of information from participants. But negotiating research relationships is much trickier in many cases than interacting in everyday life: as Johnson himself notes, a number of important ethnographic studies nearly failed due to the difficulty of navigating these “common sense” social processes. Participants do not always

cooperate with researchers; indeed, they can choose from a large repertoire of resistance strategies, ranging from outright rejection of the researcher’s requests to misleading or disinformation. Thus, it is worth understanding in more detail the processes through which some researchers successfully gain access.

THE ANECDOTAL APPROACH

The second common mode of addressing the access problem has been described as an anecdotal or “oral tradition” approach (Stewart 1998). This is part of a larger pedagogical strategy of training ethnographers through apprenticeship—either as assistants to experienced ethnographers or by reading the accounts of field experiences related in “classic” studies (Jorgenson 1989) such as the lengthy appendices to Whyte’s (1943) *Street Corner Society* or Liebow’s (1967) *Tally’s Corner*. These accounts are common enough to be viewed as a distinctive genre of social science writing (Clifford 1983a), but in illustrating the seemingly infinite variety of situations researchers may encounter in the process of gaining access, they do not provide guidance on common themes or strategies. Often, anecdotal accounts describe access as a matter of chance, outside of the researcher’s control (e.g., Liebow 1967). This genre of accounts is itself highly fragmented in that the anecdotes are in dialogue neither with one another nor with broader concepts in the field, making it difficult for researchers to glean generalities of practical value for their own work.

THE CHECKLIST APPROACH

Several scholars have attempted to consolidate the gains from the anecdotal approach by drawing out the commonalities among successful access stories (e.g., Glesne and Peshkin 1999; Lofland and Lofland 1995). Although this move toward greater generality is helpful, it has primarily produced checklists or formulas as opposed to general strategies or theory-based approaches. While each checklist contains useful information, they are rarely consistent—and are sometimes contradictory—across authors. As with the anecdotal genre, the checklist approach offers an abundance of fragments but a scarcity of linkages or unity among them. As a result, there are few general principles which can be used as a basis for improvisation when real-world conditions

don't match the assumptions of the authors' advice. Such instances point to the need for fuller theoretical explication of the access process.

THE ROLE-PLAYING APPROACH

One of the most developed approaches to the problem of access has evolved around the concept of fieldworker roles. Among the current methodological texts in ethnography, almost all have something to say about the fundamental importance of "role management" (Marshall and Rossman 1989, 65) in research design. Roles, defined as "sets of behavioral expectations" (Snow, Benford, and Anderson 1986, 378), are the vantage points from which researchers observe events in the field and interact with participants. Different roles provide access to different kinds of information (Adler, Adler, and Rochford 1986). Implicit in this view is the notion that most ethnographers will have to play multiple roles in any given field setting. Variation in roles creates variation in the information to which the researcher has access. However, researchers do not unilaterally choose their roles; instead, they encounter a fixed set of options offered by participants (Shaffir and Stebbins 1991). In working with researchers, participants define them not as unique individuals, but in terms of preexisting role categories. One implication of this approach is that researchers must be attentive to the roles offered by participants from the earliest moments of the study. This suggests one way in which a unifying theory would be useful—by identifying the interpersonal mechanisms which govern researchers' roles and thus their access to information. This is not to imply that better understanding of these mechanisms would allow researchers to control their access to data. But applying a social psychological framework could help ethnographers be more aware and skillful within the interactive context which governs their data-gathering.

THE EXCHANGE APPROACH

The most theoretically developed approach to the problem of access has been made via the exchange paradigm (Blau 1964; Wax 1952). In this view, gaining access depends on researchers giving something to the people they are studying. This approach offers a real basis for methodological development but leaves some critical issues unexamined. Most important, the exchange approach has not clarified what

researchers might expect to use as a medium of exchange in the field. Material exchange is highly unlikely, since most fieldworkers "cannot offer very much of obvious value to those who are studied" (Van Maanen 1991, 34). Researchers who have tried to buy their way into a community have often found that this strategy creates more problems than it solves (Whyte 1984). In practice, most fieldwork exchange is "nonmaterial and symbolic" (Jorgenson 1989, 70); the "currency" of these interactions includes items that we ordinarily don't regard in an instrumental light, such as respect, sympathy, or advice. Indeed, the value of these currencies often depends on the appearance of authenticity. Were the expression of sympathy and respect to be *perceived* as strategic or instrumentally oriented, it could badly undermine trust between researcher and participants. This makes it difficult to assess how researchers would use exchange theory in the field to gain access, and suggests the need for an alternative formulation of researcher-participant transactions that could incorporate the insights of this perspective and link them to other facets of the literature on access.

SOCIAL IDENTITY, SELF-PRESENTATION, AND THE PROBLEM OF ACCESS

In an insightful discussion of ethnographic methods, Johnson (1975) offers the following observation about the access problem:

The observer's personal characteristics will be combined in a variety of ways to make imputations of motive, intention, and purpose and to evaluate moral character. Numerous putative traits such as one's sexual status, racial status, socioeconomic background, educational background, and personal biography may be used to make such determinations. Furthermore, these are combined with other common-sense cultural understandings about the observer's deference, demeanor and presentation of self as evaluations of moral character and trustworthiness are made. (p. 112-13)

The complex interacting variables in play—researchers' traits, participants' interpretations—suggest why Johnson argues elsewhere that access cannot be theorized at all. In this account, researchers have little influence over how participants view—and ultimately decide to accept or reject—them. Johnson's description also suggests why the literature

on the subject has been so fragmented: access is a multifaceted process, challenging to conceptualize in its entirety.

However, the core argument of this article is that the processes and variables that Johnson describes are not entirely chaotic or unpredictable, but subject to certain regularities—regularities which can be grasped readily within the social psychological paradigm. As meso-level theories, social identity and self-presentation can tie together many of the micro-level idiosyncrasies of researcher-participant relations and link them to broader social structures. Furthermore, knowledge of these regularities in interaction can help researchers interact with participants with greater awareness and skillfulness. This in no way implies that researchers can control or fully predict the course of their relationships with relationships. On the contrary, the social psychological approach challenges current understandings of researcher-participant relations by calling attention to the ways in which participants have the upper hand in some aspects of the access process. Given the symbolic interactionist foundations of this article (Stryker 1968; Manis and Meltzer 1978; Hewitt 1994), it is understood that the researcher-participant interaction is a two-way street, composed of symbolic give and take in terms of identity labels and categories. As Warren (2001) notes, there is always tension in “the process of finding/being given a place in the field . . . [and] it is not always possible to sort out which is which” (p. 213).

Within the symbolic interactionist tradition, the article will draw specifically on two related literatures: social identity theory (Hogg and Abrams 1990; Tajfel 1982; Tajfel and Turner 1979) and self-presentation (Rao, Schmidt, and Murray 1995; Schlenker 1986; Goffman 1959, 1956). While there is a large body of work in social psychology on self and identity in interpersonal situations, these two theories in particular offer a promising place to start examining the complexities of access. This is because social identity theory focuses on the categorization process and objectives of participants in identity negotiations, while the self-presentation literature calls attention to the call-and-response mechanisms through which identities are negotiated. In other words, social identity theory addresses the “why” of identity negotiation, while self-presentation theory looks at the “how” of these interactions. Both theories help us create a model of the access process which is both more specific (in its focus on ends and means) and more general in its applications than previous formulations.

To show how the processes described in theories might operate in fieldwork interactions, examples will be drawn from ethnographers’ tales of the field. These examples are not intended to “prove” the theories, but merely to illustrate the theories’ application to researcher-participant relations. Some examples show how ethnographers have successfully made the leap from being mistrusted outsiders to trusted observers using social identity and self-presentation strategies—without necessarily labeling their actions in those terms. Other examples show the access problems that result when researchers run afoul of these processes. All the examples suggest that finding a match between the researchers’ identity and the categories available in the field is a matter of skillful negotiation of symbolic interaction processes rather than happenstance. Even seemingly inflexible traits like gender or race can be presented in a variety of ways, some of which are more strategic than others (Glesne and Peshkin 1999). Researchers who lack this skill, or who lack an awareness of the social identity and self-presentation processes occurring in the field, run the risk of being categorized without their awareness (Peshkin 1986). While numerous studies could be used as examples, the cases described here were selected for the extensive detail they offered on interpersonal processes between researchers and participants.

SYMBOLIC INTERACTION

At the most general level, this article draws on one of the oldest traditions in sociological social psychology: symbolic interactionist theory (Mead 1934). This theory postulates that the central task of social life is alignment with others: forging connections with and between the self and other objects through symbolic means. Much of social interaction in this theory is conceptualized as a series of negotiations using language and other symbols to label and categorize objects. These labels come with behavioral expectations known as roles; thus, labels shape whether and how individuals interact with objects (Stryker 1968).

Two implications of symbolic interactionist theory hold particular relevance for ethnographers. The first is that the self is not a single, homogenous entity, but a multifaceted complex of labels and roles derived from negotiated interaction (Manis and Meltzer 1978). Individuals can use this “portfolio” of identities as a symbolic resource to help them align with others. The second key implication of symbolic

interaction is that the outcome of any given situation is potentially novel (Hewitt 1994). Negotiation among individuals endowed with symbolic resources—including their complex, multifaceted selves—can go in many different directions.

The first implication suggests why ethnographers could benefit from more focused attention on theories of identity: their own identities are among their most valuable resources for forming connections with participants. The second implication sheds light on the improvisational nature of researcher-participant relationships, moving them beyond the cooperation/exploitation framework to a model focused on the negotiation process. This is not to assert that researchers and participants are always equal in terms of power; rather, the symbolic interactionist view proposes that power is a variable contingent on possession and use of symbolic resources. In this sense, taking a theoretical perspective on access allows us to integrate what most ethnographers already know—that relationships with participants are neither predictable nor controllable—while also defining the regularities and mechanisms in the access process that can help researchers interact skillfully in the field.

SOCIAL IDENTITY

Social identity theory calls attention to some of the underlying mechanisms in the symbolic interaction between researchers and participants. In social identity theory, as in the symbolic interactionist framework in general, individuals' sense of self is taken to be multiplex and composed of both unique and collective aspects negotiated in interaction (Tajfel and Turner 1979). The collective aspects, based on group memberships, are the focus of the theory. An individual may have as many social identities as group memberships. These identities may conflict in some ways and thus must be managed; at the same time, they constitute an important and flexible resource for making connections with others. The basis of social identity can be almost anything, including demographic traits, life experiences, hobbies, and so on (Ashforth and Mael 1989). Which identity categories are salient for individuals at any given time depends on the social context. As Hogg and McGarty (1990) put it, "social categories are applied in a way which is socially adaptive for the perceiver" (p. 22).

Despite its fluidity and context-dependence, the regularities and explanatory power in this theory arise in the form of assumptions about

actors' interpersonal objectives. These insights constitute a distinct contribution that social identity theory makes within the symbolic interactionist framework, and in contrast to self-presentation theory. The basic assumptions are that actors are driven by the following processes: self-categorization; identity enhancement; and similarity/attraction. These processes interact and drive the choice of salient identities, as well as shaping the consequences of making any given identity claim.

Having a social identity as a member of any given group means accepting at least some group values and norms, as well as some degree of conformity to prototypical behaviors (Hogg and Terry 2000). Groups vary in the amount of latitude they give individuals in conformity to and acceptance of these roles and norms. In this theoretical framework, roles function in part to signal group identity (Turner 1990). The key dynamic underlying both roles in particular and social identity in general is that of uncertainty reduction through self-categorization (Hogg and Terry 2000; Turner 1990). That is, claiming a social identity and a role within it serves a basic cognitive need by signaling who you are and how you can be expected to behave. Social identity theory construes this as adaptive for both actors and perceivers.

When ethnographers approach a potential research site, they confront an identity group with a set of preexisting categories into which researchers will be placed. The practical question is whether or not researchers will participate knowledgeably in that negotiation. This implies the following regularity in the access process:

When ethnographers approach a research site, they will be defined in terms of social identity categories salient to participants.

As Warren (2001, 203) observes, "the fieldworker is the [embodied] 'research instrument'" who negotiates but cannot fully control his or her social placement within the field. Indeed, numerous tales of the field illustrate the power and creativity that participants wield in categorizing researchers so as to make their presence more familiar, comfortable, and thus less threatening to group identity. For example, when Peshkin (1986) studied children in a Christian school, he found that his ongoing presence as an adult in the classroom provoked an adaptive response in the students: to reduce the ambiguity of his role, they classified him as a teacher and began bringing him questions about their

schoolwork. Similarly, when Horowitz (1986) began hanging out in a Chicago park to study street gangs, the gang members adapted to her presence by assigning her a role meaningful in their world: that of "lady." The role was shared by their mothers and other women they respected, and the participants taught Horowitz how to play it; for example, she was not allowed to use profanity or to discuss sex with them. In my own research in a gay men's organization, I nearly failed to gain access because of participants' hostility to my presence as a woman. No one would talk to me, or even make eye contact. Eventually, one participant broke the tension by defining me as the group's "drag queen" (Harrington 1999); this label placed me in a meaningful, familiar and valued role in the group, immediately transforming the other participants' willingness to talk with me.

These categorization processes interact with the desire for identity enhancement. That is, actors not only categorize themselves but attempt to do so in the most positive terms, especially relative to reference groups. As Hogg and Abrams (1990) write, "people generally prefer to seek out positive information about themselves rather than seize the opportunity to learn more about themselves" (p. 22). This applies to organizations and communities, as well as individuals.

In practical terms, this means that individuals and groups prefer to interact with others who have been categorized as similar to themselves. Literally, being "like" results in being better-liked (Hogg and Terry 2000). This is in part because those who are familiar along salient dimensions are assumed to be nonthreatening to the group identity. This does not imply that groups always reject people who are different; the key in social identity theory is similarity or enhancement of salient identities. Indeed, it can be identity-enhancing when a high-status individual who is otherwise very different from other group members wants to study the group or shows that he or she shares a salient characteristic that defines the group's identity.

Categorization processes and the attributions that result from them have important consequences for behavior, particularly for ethnographers seeking access to research sites. The interaction processes underlying social identity theory produce in-group bias, stereotyping, and group cohesion. As a result, those categorized as familiar or similar to the group receive the group's trust, cooperation, and support (Hogg and Abrams 1990). Those labeled as unfamiliar, different, or unsympathetic to the group's identity are likely to be treated with

suspicion and hostility, because deviance threatens the group prototype, which is the basis for identification (Hogg and Terry 2000; Brewer 1979). This implies the following regularity in the access process:

Ethnographers gain access to information to the extent that they are categorized as sharing a valued social identity with participants or as enhancing that identity through their research.

As noted above, researchers entering a field site encounter not only participants but the participants' preexisting categories for understanding the world—categories which will be applied to researchers as a way of getting a definitional "handle" on their presence, and figuring out how to interact with them. To a large extent, this categorization process is outside researchers' control. Indeed, Tajfel and Turner (1979) identify "social creativity" as one of the common responses that groups make to intruders entering their midst. "Social creativity" is a definitional act geared toward identity enhancement. As Rao, Davis, and Ward (2000) put it, "social creativity tactics are cognitive endeavors that involve the use of advantageous bases of comparison and have collective implications" (p. 290). This suggests that in order to gain access to a field site, researchers must be categorized in ways that are not only *relevant* to participants (as noted in implication 1 above) but also identity-enhancing.

The importance of identity enhancement and similarity/attraction processes in researcher-participant relations has meant that many ethnographers have studied groups of which they themselves were members (Berg 1998). For example, Schwalbe's (1996) study of the men's movement was made possible by his involvement as a full participant—though once accepted into the group, he subverted its behavioral norms as a data-gathering strategy (Harrington 2002). As the examples above indicate, it is not necessary for researchers to be insiders in order to gain access to information from participants. Rather, in keeping with the propositions of social identity theory, researchers must be defined in terms that either enhance or do not threaten participants' group identity.

How researchers negotiate their part of this role-assignment process circumscribes their access to data. For example, Van Maanen's (1988) attempt to study an urban police department was stymied until he met a faculty member at his university with close ties to a nearby police force.

This faculty member had worked as a consultant to the police, and gained their trust. When Van Maanen reframed his request to do research as an “associate of Professor X,” the police welcomed him and provided him with all the information he required. In other words, Van Maanen was able to position his request as an extension of an existing relationship with Professor X, rather than as a new request to allow an outsider into the fold.

When researchers cannot adopt a field identity that engages similarity/attraction or identity-enhancement processes for participants, researchers’ access to data can be limited. For example, Warren (1988) notes that her study of a secretive gay male community was limited to public venues such as bars. Because of her gender and sexuality, she was not allowed access to “backstage” areas, such as bathhouses. That is not to say that being labeled an outsider always has negative consequences for gathering data. On the contrary, many groups find it identity-enhancing to be studied by a sympathetic outsider; the interest of the researcher can be interpreted as conferring a flattering aura of “specialness” on the group. Outsider status can also provide role flexibility, thereby increasing data collection opportunities through multiple vantage points in the field (Horowitz 1986).

SELF-PRESENTATION THEORY

If social identity theory explicates the psychological objectives underlying identity negotiation, self-presentation theory defines the “how” of interaction: the ways in which identity can be used as a strategic resource (Rao et al. 1995; Schlenker 1986; Goffman 1959, 1956). As with social identity theory, self-presentation regards individuals’ internalized sense of self as the outcome of negotiated interaction. However, self-presentation theory is distinctive in its focus on the mechanisms of the negotiation itself. In addition, self-presentation focuses on actors’ strategic motivations: identities are not just enhancing or uncertainty-reducing, but ways to get things done.

Creating a social identity is a ritualized encounter between actors and audiences. The “chain of ceremony” (Goffman 1956, 82) is initiated by an actor’s claim to a given identity, such as that of “trustworthy and discreet observer.” But the claim is incomplete without a response from the target audience—in this case, participants. Audiences cue

information about context and salient norms, and ultimately accept or reject an actor’s claims. As Goffman (1956) writes,

The individual must rely on others to complete the picture of him of which he himself is only allowed to paint certain parts . . . the part expressed through the individual’s demeanor being no more significant than the part conveyed by others through their deferential behavior toward him. (p. 493)

Self-presentation theory suggests why ethnographers cannot identify with any group at will, and why participants retain significant power in the access process. This is because social identity must be negotiated through the process of self-presentation, and an identity claim must be validated by an audience. As numerous tales of the field have documented, ethnographers’ identity claims can be rejected. Once a researcher makes his or her self-presentation to participants, there is always a certain amount of anxiety in awaiting a response—a phenomenon noted in Goffman (1956) and echoed in the field notes of numerous ethnographers, fearful that their identity as trustworthy and discreet observers would not be accepted by participants (Shaffir 1991). The practical problem for ethnographers is finding the strategic match between the actors’ identity and those of the target group (Scott and Lane 2000). This implies the following regularity in the access process:

Ethnographers’ identity claims must be validated by participants in order for researchers to gain access to information.

In light of this implication, some of the most interesting tales of the field describe studies that were almost derailed by participants’ refusal to accept researchers’ identity claims. For example, Kolb’s (1983) study of government mediators was nearly dealt a mortal blow by a key gatekeeper’s rejection of Kolb’s claim to be a trustworthy and unobtrusive researcher. The director of the state mediation agency frequently told Kolb that he feared she would not respect confidentiality or that she would create a distraction for mediators on the job. As a result, the agency director forbade Kolb to record data in any way—a demand that obviously would have put an end to her project. The situation was resolved only after the dean of Kolb’s graduate school called several times to vouch for her—in effect, persuading the gatekeeper to accept her identity claim.

Similarly, Wolf's (1991) study of an "outlaw" biker group got off to a false start when his self-presentation claims were rejected as too "pushy" or ostentatious by participants. Wolf's ability to gain access depended upon his ability to convincingly portray himself as a fellow motorcycle buff. But, in an experience that embodies Goffman's (1956, 1959) point about the "call and response" nature of self-presentation, his initial gambits were notably unsuccessful. As Wolf (1991) discovers, there is no identity without affirmation from others:

My first attempts at contacting an outlaw club were near-disasters. . . . I lacked patience and pushed the situation by asking too many questions. I found out quickly that outsiders, even bikers, do not rush into a club, and that anyone who doesn't show the proper restraint will be shut out. (p. 210)

Wolf eventually succeeded in gaining access to the group by adopting a passive stance: posing with his gear at rallies but hanging back, waiting to be approached. This signaled his willingness to negotiate an identity for himself with participants, rather than imposing one unilaterally.

In addition to the necessity of audience approval, another noteworthy constraint on self-presentation is the limited identity resources that researchers can bring to bear in forming relationships with participants. While self-presentation theory—in keeping with the symbolic interactionist framework—posits that identity is complex and multifaceted, it also acknowledges that actors have a finite set of affiliations on which they can draw. These include demographic and biographical traits, experiences, or other group identities. While there is room for creativity and flexibility in establishing a shared social identity, sometimes researchers are unable to present themselves in a light that will be acceptable to participants. In some cases, this may lead to the use of insider informants, or even deception, to bridge the gap between researchers and participants. This implies the following regularity in the access process:

The more that ethnographers' social identities differ from those of participants, the more likely that access will involve the use of insider informants or deception as self-presentation strategies.

One of the best-known examples of this empirical regularity is Whyte's (1943) study of a working-class community known as "Cornerville." Whyte, an Anglo-Saxon Protestant with a graduate degree and Harvard affiliation, was badly mismatched with the social identity of the Cornerville community. Participants initially regarded him not only as an outsider but also as a most unwelcome intruder. Whyte resorted to the use of an informant after failing several times to establish himself through more direct means. For example, he tried initially to gain access through working as a door-to-door opinion researcher. Finding that approach a "total loss" (1943, 283) because of his obvious outsider status, he visited a Cornerville bar and offered to buy drinks for women in exchange for their life stories. This was interpreted by the community as a courtship overture and resulted in the local men threatening to throw Whyte down the stairs for invading their "turf." Ultimately, this mismatch between Whyte's self-presentation and the social identity of the community necessitated the use of an insider informant, Doc. Recognizing the "limits of the initial sponsorship" (Whyte 1984, 38), however, Whyte ultimately sought to expand his social identity by learning Italian—the primary language of the participants—to better match the salient identity of the community in his own right. (See Figure 1.)

It is also worth noting that researcher-informant relationships, such as Whyte's connection to Doc, are mediated by social identity processes. In Whyte's case, he met Doc through a third party: a social worker employed in Cornerville, who shared with Whyte an identity as an educated, middle-class Anglo-American. Thus, as Whyte (1984) concluded in a later reflection on this research, "If you aim to study a whole community, the most open points of entry are among those who share your social class background" (p. 37).

Finally, some researchers have dealt with their inability to find a self-presentation strategy acceptable to participants by resorting to deception—an approach which is both difficult to sustain (Jorgenson 1989) and ethically questionable. Among the best-known of the studies using this approach is Humphreys' (1970) study of anonymous homosexual encounters in public restrooms—the "tearoom trade." Humphreys' original plan was to study the gay community by interviewing men in gay bars; however, many of the men had already had bad experiences cooperating with researchers and refused to give him information.

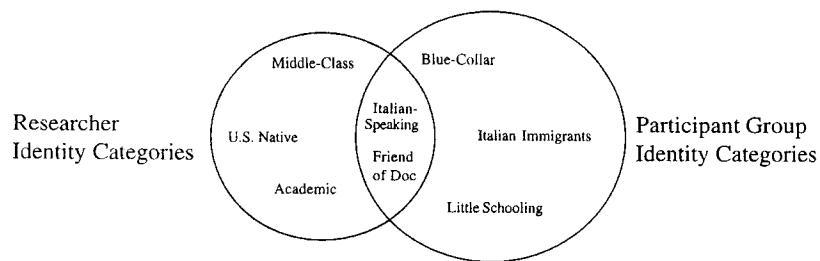


Figure 1. Strategic matching of researcher and participant characteristics in Whyte's (1943) study of Cornerville.

Unable to get the desired response to his self-presentation as a researcher, Humphreys claimed that it was necessary to adopt a deceptive social identity as an insider: a full participant in the "tearoom" scene. Humphreys concealed his research intent from participants, which later resulted in intense criticism from other sociologists, including questions about whether deception was truly his only option. A better understanding of the social psychological regularities underlying the access process may help reduce the temptation to resort to such strategies.

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES IN THE METHODS LITERATURE

Adding further support for reframing the access problem in social psychological terms, the ethnographic methods literature echoes the tales of the field by drawing on a mix of concepts associated with social identity and self-presentation. Roles, impression management, and similarity/attraction all figure prominently in ethnographic methodology texts. As an example, consider Glesne and Peshkin's (1999) analysis of the role of the researcher in the access process:

Qualitative researchers are like actors; they must be able to "unself" themselves as they enter the lives of other people. They do not "become" other people, but *they do manage the impressions that they give. . . . managing selves that are instrumental to gaining access and maintaining access* throughout the period of study in a way that optimizes the data collection. (p. 58, my emphasis)

Many others who have written about ethnographic methodology have used terms and concepts that similarly echo the language of social identity and self-presentation. (See Appendix for examples.)

Within this methodological literature, the social psychological approach can integrate prior approaches to the access problem and put them into a broader, more useful context. The "commonsense," anecdotal, checklist, role-playing, and exchange approaches to access draw on social identity and self-presentation concepts in a scattered and largely implicit fashion. Calling upon these theories explicitly can tie together the insights of previous approaches, under the umbrella of a meso-level theory that links micro-interactional processes to broader social structures.

For example, both social identity and self-presentation theories are compatible with the commonsense approach to access in the sense that social identity and self-presentation skills are features of everyday life. But since everyday life is often an object of inquiry for sociologists (Schwalbe 1996), there is a precedent for developing a stronger theoretical understanding of the basic social processes ethnographers use in the field. In addition, the contingent and processual nature of social identity and self-presentation processes suggest why there is some intuitive appeal to the anecdotal approach: each research situation appears highly idiosyncratic, dependent upon a unique synergy of traits between researchers and participants. Social identity and self-presentation theories help us identify the regularities and processes underlying these seemingly unique situations. The social psychological approach also offers the kind of general framework that the checklist approach has tried to provide. But social identity and self-presentation theories go a step further than checklists by elaborating a set of interrelated mechanisms and concepts that can be applied to other research contexts.

Finally, social identity and self-presentation theories echo the role-playing and exchange approaches by drawing attention to the importance of roles and reciprocity in establishing relations of goodwill and acceptance with participants. But the social psychological theories go beyond existing work to explain how and why roles and reciprocity work in the field. For example, many researchers have noted that exchanges of intangibles like stories and emotional support are much more effective in garnering access than material exchanges such as money or goods (Whyte 1984). Social psychological theory helps us

understand why: participants are trying to figure out who the researcher is, and what her presence means for the status of group identity. Anything that signals a valued, salient, and shared identity (like Whyte learning Italian in Cornerville) is interpreted as positive and provides a basis for further relationship. Equipped with this kind of theoretical understanding, researchers can focus on the most effective means of gaining access in the field, which involves specific kinds of roles and exchanges. Thus, a social psychological approach to the access problem helps ethnographers not only to better define the access problem but also to respond to it in a more skillful and informed way.

Ultimately, greater awareness and use of social identity and self-presentation theories afford ethnographic researchers a coherent framework for representing their methodology to readers. Since ethnography is an interpretive method, its authority as a mode of social scientific research depends upon its authenticity rather than any claims to represent absolute truth. It is understood that there can be no one definitive account of a community, apart from the standpoint of the researcher. However, researchers must provide evidence that their accounts are credible and authentic (Stoddart 1986). This is accomplished primarily by specifying researchers' relationship to participants, demonstrating a disciplined approach to data-gathering, and addressing any limitations or biases induced by the researcher's social location in the field (Golden-Biddle and Locke 1993). A social psychological framework for ethnographic research helps researchers demonstrate skillful self-awareness in managing relationships with participants—a requisite for producing "adequate ethnography" (Stoddart 1986)—while also providing a common language with which to articulate those claims.

DISCUSSION

This article has proposed that ethnography as a research practice involves social psychological processes worthy of more explicit and serious theoretical attention. As many works of ethnography and ethnographic methods acknowledge, gaining access to data requires that researchers establish roles and relationships that participants find acceptable. Yet beyond defining concepts such as access, rapport, and entry, there is little agreement on how ethnographers actually engage in this process and come to know things in the field.

This article argues that by examining current methodological writings on access, as well as ethnographers' tales of the field, a pattern emerges that strongly suggests the appropriateness of framing researcher-participant relationships in terms of social identity and self-presentation theories. Applying the social psychological framework to the access problem makes two major contributions to the ethnographic methods literature. First and foremost, it provides a conceptual bridge to integrate present formulations of the access problem, many of which employ social psychological concepts but are not in explicit dialogue with the theories—or with each other. Second, the social psychological approach allows us to take a fresh perspective on current controversies in the field, complicating notions of power and identity while at the same time being more specific about how these processes operate in practice. Specifically, it sheds light on some overlooked aspects of participants' power to shape the social place of ethnographers in the field and influence the success or failure of their projects.

Within a broad symbolic interactionist framework, social identity and self-presentation theories are particularly appropriate for theorizing about these social forces in ethnography because they address the mechanisms of building interpersonal relationships. Social identity theory, like symbolic interactionism, examines the processes through which individuals label and categorize themselves and each other. But social identity theory delves into the underlying objectives driving those processes: identity-enhancement and similarity-attraction. These goals are relevant to ethnographic practice because they shape whether, and on what terms, participants will grant data-gathering access to researchers. Self-presentation theory, on the other hand, calls attention to the strategic negotiation process through which social identities are established. Like symbolic interactionist and social identity theories, self-presentation theory posits that we all have multiple social identities which constitute a valuable resource for building bonds of similarity and attraction. But self-presentation theory points out that identity claims cannot be unilateral; for example, participants are not passive recipients of a researcher's impression management strategies, but are active in accepting, rejecting, or modifying the researcher's identity claims.

Thus, the primary contribution of this article is to contend that social identity and self-presentation theories provide the much needed conceptual bridge to link current conceptualizations of the access process

in the ethnographic methods literature. This article has identified at least five major approaches to access in this literature. While each approach provides valuable insight, they are fragmentary accounts, showcasing facets of access without acknowledging the whole. The social psychological framework proposed in this article offers the coherence that has been lacking in accounts of the access process, providing a meso-structure that ties micro-level observations to larger social structures. Following on this insight, a secondary contribution of this article is to note that ethnographers are as much identity managers as data-gatherers. That is, given the importance of social identity and self-presentation for gaining access to research sites and data, these theories deserve as much attention in the methods literature as data-gathering and other tasks receive.

A final contribution of this article is to point out that participants are much more powerful than they are given credit for in the current ethnographic methods literature. Researcher-participant power relations are vexed not only by the existence of "native ethnographers" but also by the power of participants as gatekeepers. The evidence of tales of the field, seen through the lens of social identity and self-presentation theory, suggests that participants wield this power in two ways: by defining the categories and labels through which researchers will be identified and by the ability to accept or reject researchers' identity claims based on whether those claims are perceived as identity-enhancing for the group.

Viewing researcher-participant relationships in this way allows ethnographers to move beyond problematic assumptions about power and identity in the field. Instead of viewing access as a matter of either cooperation or exploitation, self-presentation theory urges us to view it as a negotiation among parties who are all endowed with some amount of power in the form of symbolic resources. Thus, power becomes a variable rather than fixed attribute of either researchers or participants, allowing for a much broader conception of both identities. This insight brings conceptualizations of access into closer alignment with symbolic interaction theory.

Greater theoretical development does not imply, however, that ethnographers can control or fully predict how they will interact with participants. Rather, this article suggests that beneath the unique features of each researcher-participant relationship lie social psychological regularities, just as jazz improvisation is underpinned by a structure

of chord progressions. Ultimately, the article conceives of a more theoretically self-aware ethnography as "informed improvisation," in which researchers continually explore variations on core interpersonal themes.

The limitations of this article suggest several interesting directions for future research. As a starting point in applying a broad social psychological framework to the access process, this article does not review all the literature on symbolic interaction, identity, self, and interpersonal relations. Future research might take on a more detailed investigation of identity negotiation and its implications for data-gathering. For example, one could examine how the multifaceted structure of the self interacts with the structure of complex organizations. In addition, future research could use social psychological theory to examine the qualitative differences between the relationships researchers have with key informants versus other participants. Thus, a social psychological framework contributes to ethnography not only through the issues it address but also through the new questions it raises for the field.

APPENDIX
Social Identity and Self-Presentation in Ethnographic Methods

<i>Theory</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Account of Access Process</i>
Social Identity	Burgess	In the conduct of ethnographic research it is the researchers themselves who stand at the heart of the research process. Indeed, many of their ascribed characteristics—age, sex, social class, social status, and ethnicity— influence the extent to which access is granted or withheld (1991, 49).
	Glesne and Peshkin	We suggest that you begin by asking what there is about your identity or persona—such as gender, age, ethnicity, or country of origin—that might affect your access and data collection. Are there ways in which you can monitor yourself to gain more information . . . be on the lookout for ways to adjust or accommodate yourself so that you “fit in” in a manner instrumental to gathering data (1999, 60).
	Johnson	What the observer will be allowed to see in the setting and the truthfulness of the statements made by the members will depend on (1) <i>how they define him as a person</i> , and (2) <i>how the observer’s role is socially defined by others in the setting</i> (1975, 85-6, my emphasis).
	Jorgenson	The participant observer’s biography may be used to overcome social distance. Discovering and sharing common life experiences are effective in generating sympathetic understanding and social bonds among people. Similarities in age, current or former residential locations, military service, religion, marital status or history, employment, hobbies and so on frequently are bases for emergent rapport (1989, 77).
	Shaffir	[Participants’] cooperation reflects less their estimation of the scientific merits of the research than their response to my personal attributes . . . successful entry into a research setting and securing the requisite cooperation to proceed with the study, depend less on the execution of any scientific canons of research than upon the researcher’s ability to engage in sociable behavior that respects the cultural world of his or her hosts (1991, 72-3).
	Snow, Benford, and Anderson	Prior to entering the research situation fieldworkers ought to give more attention to the field roles that await them or that are to be devised (1986, 404).
Self-Presentation	Van Maanen and Kolb	<i>Fieldworkers must cast themselves in roles that are culturally meaningful to the studied.</i> In the absence of such roles, members will experience considerable difficulty in establishing relationships with the fieldworker that go beyond the most perfunctory sort (1985, 23, my emphasis).
	Whyte	My effort to learn the language [Italian] probably did more to establish the sincerity of my interest in the people [of Cornerville] than anything I could have told them of myself and my work. How could a researcher be planning to “criticize our people” if he went to the lengths of learning the language? With language comes understanding, and surely it is easier to criticize people if you do not understand them (1984, 47).
	Glesne and Peshkin	Participant observers are selectively present in that they hold back their words and watch carefully what they say when they do talk. They strive to attain optimally nonreactive presence in order to minimize the shaping of the research participants’ self-presentation in reaction to the researchers as stimulus . . . even with seemingly unchangeable characteristics such as gender or ethnicity, you do have some choice in how you present yourself (1999, 58-9).
	Horowitz	Fieldworker roles are . . . interactional matters based on processes of continuing negotiation between the researcher and the researched. Together, the qualities and attributes of the fieldworker interact with those of the setting and its members to shape, if not create, an emergent role for the researcher (1986, 410).
	Jorgenson	Self-revelation is a very effective commonsense strategy for generating rapport. By this strategy, you tell someone a detail about yourself, usually something you would not tell just anyone, such as a personal secret. . . . The sharing of this information creates common experience that ostensibly is special or based on a special relationship. It represents a gift, a sign of respect and trust for the person to whom you reveal yourself. . . . The strategy of self-revelation, in any case, is an effective tool for developing rapport in the field because it creates the sense of common, even intimate, experience between people. Perhaps the most effective general strategy for solidifying sympathetic field relations is to engage in joint activities. By participating together, people create shared experiences. Unusual experiences, ones characterized by a high degree of emotion, are especially effective in producing solidarity. . . . These activities serve to mark the boundaries between insiders and outsiders, creating distinctive ‘we’ feelings and solidarity (1989, 77-8).

(continued)

APPENDIX (continued)

Theory	Author	Account of Access Process
Marshall and Rossman	Research designs demonstrate the researcher's awareness about <i>managing impressions that facilitate the research</i> Researchers then devise roles that elicit cooperation, trust, openness and acceptance (1989, 65, my emphasis).	
Shaffir and Stebbins	Entering the field and cultivating rich relationships are attributable mainly to the researcher's personal attributes and self-presentation, and to others' judgements of him or her as a human being (1991, 29).	
Shaffir	The researcher does not simply appropriate a particular status, but discovers that he or she is accorded a status by the hosts that reflects their understanding of his or her presence (1991, 79).	

NOTE

1. Given the focus of this article, I will not attempt to address the implications of this project for all the wings of symbolic interactionist and social psychological theories.

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