

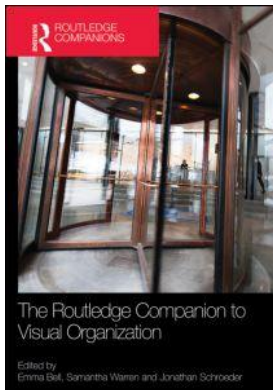
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Ethnographic videography and filmmaking for consumer research

Ekant Veer

Introduction

It is becoming apparent that videography and filmmaking is increasingly central to ethnographic consumer research, as a means of collecting, analysing and disseminating data in order to understand consumers' lives and consumer culture. In this chapter, I share some insights from consumer research to develop greater understanding of the uses and misuses of videography as an aid to ethnographic research; that is, how can researchers use video-recording tools to better understand a culture and the nuances associated with it, which cannot be captured without videography.

Visual data and ethnography have a strong and longstanding history (Pink 2008; White 1963; Ball 1998; Russell 1999), but it is evident that, without effective videographic skills, many nuances associated with ethnographic research are being missed by researchers (Heider 2006). Filmmaking is no longer confined to documentary makers who distinguish themselves from academic research; videoethnographic methods are becoming, if not already, mainstream. In addition, advances in technology make videography equipment more accessible to many researchers, while advances in visual analysis are making visual data a fundamental part of ethnography. As a growing number of researchers adopt a variety of contexts in which to conduct ethnographies, there is increased demand for effective and efficient use of videography for research purposes. Ethnographic research is no longer the domain of anthropologists entering a forgotten tribe, but rather a methodology that permeates all aspects of culture and interaction. By using videographic data as part of the data collection, analysis and dissemination of the research, the ethnographer is able to capture a richer set of data as well as, some may argue, a more unbiased account of the culture under investigation, compared to fieldnotes from a single researcher.

Rather than make this chapter a deep exploration of the ethnographic methodology, I will focus on the means by which videography can be specifically used to aid ethnography, from data collection to analysis and dissemination of findings. I begin by discussing the means by which videography can be used to elucidate the nuances of a culture, specifically for business and organizational research (cf. Sanders 2003), and aid in the ethnographic process. I continue by

discussing how filmmaking can be harnessed as a means of disseminating ethnographic findings. First, I explain why I engage with videoethnographic research.

Why videoethnography?

Videoethnography is not suited for every research project. It is not the new way forward and it is not essential for the qualitative researcher of the future. However, there are situations and scenarios where videoethnography not only makes data collection easier, but is sometimes the only means by which data can be collected. For example, when I studied the role of weddings in Indian culture, I realized that words could never adequately describe the jewellery, costume, sounds, chants and dynamism of an Indian wedding in sufficient detail. Video data needed to be collected. To be fair, even a video is still not a full representation of an Indian wedding, as one requires the smell, taste, touch and ambiance of an Indian wedding to fully appreciate the impact it has.

Videoethnography helps us to capture that which is indescribable in words. It is not solely a means of storing visual and audio data in a permanent form, but also offers a way of collecting large amounts of data that can subsequently be analysed from a multitude of perspectives. For instance, a narrative analyst would be able to incorporate tonality and inflexion far more effectively into his/her analysis; a body language analyst might focus on the role of subtle body movements into their analysis; an ethnographer can develop a fuller appreciation for a culture as a whole, by taking a varied approach to the site and analysing data from multiple perspectives. My research only draws on video data when it is needed. There is no reason to collect video data when text data would adequately describe a situation or scenario. When an ethnographic site contains so much rich data that can be analysed in multiple ways, the use of video-recording equipment is almost expected.

At this point, it is necessary to distinguish between filmmaking and using film as a research tool. Collecting video data as a means of creating a film for public dissemination will be undertaken in a very different manner from collecting video data for research analysis alone. I try to incorporate both into my research; however, as videoethnographers will tell you, much video data will end up not being shown publicly. The role of video in ethnographic research is primarily to collect data for analysis, so as to further understand the culture being investigated. Once this is completed, and if the videoethnographer considers the use of film as a means of disseminating findings to be appropriate, then an edited film text can be made using the raw data. Hence, videoethnographers are not documentary makers, where the primary purpose is entertainment and education of a third party. Instead, videoethnographers are ethnographers who use video to collect and analyse data; they are documentary makers first and entertainers second.

Ethnography and visual data

Ethnographic research is focused on understanding the culture of a setting, phenomena or social group (Van Maanen 1988; Agar 1986; Fetterman 1989; Marcus 1998). Ethnographers' use of visual data is longstanding, as illustrated by the extensive use of still photography in early anthropological ethnography. However, there has been a recent upsurge in videography as an aid to ethnographic research, especially in consumer research. Videography and filmmaking allows a multi-sensory approach to understanding a culture (Collier Jr. 1988). By incorporating both the auditory and the visual in a dynamic format, the researcher is able to capture a vast array of data that he/she would otherwise not have been able to absorb or record. Even a notetaker

focused solely on recording non-verbal cues and interactions would be hard pressed to record all the information gathered by videography. The use of videography as a means of collecting videographic data offers a longer-lasting representation, untainted by subjective memory recall of events (Bennett-Levy and Powell 1980) once the researcher has left the site of investigation. The quantity of data generated can, however, be daunting.

This richness is evident in my very first experiment with videoethnography as an undergraduate student. Videography was used primarily as a data collection tool when I interviewed participants about their relationship with family photographs. At the time of the interviews, my focus was on the informants, listening attentively and focusing on how to draw greater meaning from their words. This was my only chance to talk with many of them, so I needed to make the most of it. When reviewing the video footage, I noticed something that I had completely missed during the interviews themselves. Many of the participants would caress the photos of loved ones while talking to them. My Westernized upbringing had encouraged me to conform to the social norm of making eye contact with my discussant during the interview, but, by doing this, I had missed a critical aspect of their interaction with the object. Without the visual data, this interaction would have been missed and the data incomplete.

In a second piece of research, the need for videography was more explicit. While I was investigating the use of consumerism in Indian weddings (Veer 2009), the sheer volume of data I was faced with meant it would be impossible to accurately record and recall every aspect of the elaborate Indian festivities without the visual data. The colours, the noise, the dynamism of the participants and the organized chaos meant that videography was not simply a cool addition to the research, but also a much-needed tool to ensure data completeness. With so much data encapsulated into each frame of video, the richness of the data meant that analysis could take multiple paths. However, had my own consciousness and some rough fieldnotes been the only record, the concepts that were salient to me at the time of data collection would have been the dominant focus of analysis, thereby restricting the research.

In the documentary 'Pushing the scene', Hietanan *et al.* (2011) capture the multifaceted nature of the underground dubstep movement and express it through film. Rather than simply rely on transcripts, the use of videography ensures that the music, the movement, the rawness of the culture is captured and disseminated in a way that is impossible in a print format. There exist a number of contexts where videoethnography are particularly useful. The following are examples of a few contexts and situations where video and visual data are of specific importance.

Data amount

Any context where it is expected that the data present would not be effectively captured without some form of formal recording requires videoethnographic data. If one was to look specifically at the visual or auditory aspects of a site, videography is an obvious choice. There may be occasions where the site contains so much 'action' and so many actors that taking notes of every occurrence would do a disservice to the many aspects that are not being focused upon.

Millen (2000) argues that the sheer volume of data can make some ethnographic studies uninteresting, and that a more focused approach to a field with a more defined scope would be a better use of the ethnographer's time and energy. However, restricting the amount of data collected in the hope that this conserves resources, in my view, limits the site of investigation and the potential of the research. I am, therefore, willing to observe hours of data in order to find the 'nugget of gold', as it is the unknown and the unexpected that makes the ethnography worthwhile, which cannot be achieved through the restriction of scope to make research easier and faster.

Experienced organizational ethnographers also understand that action can be found in many mundane contexts. For example, a boardroom discussion can become extremely animated as a contentious issue is raised. Having visual data to analyse all the participants' behaviour and voices can aid in understanding the cultural context within which this interaction takes place. Capturing these behavioural nuances without the aid of video data can make the behaviour extremely difficult to retain and recall for analysis purposes. The ethnographer can, if desired, minutely analyse each aspect of a video to search for patterns and processes that are meaningful, rather than rely on what was meaningful at the time of capturing the data, as is the nature of fieldnote recording, which is bound by one's subjective rationale at that moment (Van Maanen 1988).

Data richness

The adage 'a picture paints a thousand words' is at the heart of the motivation for using video data in ethnography. The nuances and complexity associated with video data can make it difficult to analyse without a means of effective capture (Pink 2001). If the site under investigation not only has a large amount of data, but also contains data that is very precise and intricate, videography as a means of recording actions is recommended. Observational data may only be able to provide some of the information necessary, but video data has the ability to offer far deeper and richer data for analysis. For example, if one is investigating routines and rituals at work, recording not just when employees take breaks, but also the way in which employees relax during a busy day would be of interest. This richness is also a downfall of video, as it can make it difficult to extrapolate patterns and themes, simply because of the variety of possible meanings associated with the data (Mackay *et al.* 1988). However, as a researcher, being afforded an excess of data via a media-rich format, such as video, is of huge benefit compared to having insufficient data (Gluckman 1961; LeCompte and Goetz 1982).

Data comparison

If a researcher is conducting a comparative study of a number of sites or how a site changes over time, the use of videographic data can also be advantageous. By comparing changes or similarities across sites and time through visual analysis, one is able to gain a greater appreciation for how nuanced a culture is. For example, videography of an organization as it transitions through its life may show that, as a business grows, it may employ more people, resources and space, but the culture of the organization is very similar to how it started. Alternatively, studying how people drink coffee at different *Starbucks* cafes around the world would show that, although the brand is the same, the culture within the brand is very different. When multiple authors and interpreters are involved, having a common capture method can avoid biases associated with data collection. Starting with a common means of data capture can then be followed by analysis and interpretation.

By drawing on visual data, the visual comparison method becomes another addition to one's ethnography and the story being told. Visual comparison techniques are extensive and can be approached in a number of ways (Cooper 1976; Breitmeyer and Ogmen 2000). However, without the visual data to begin with, the comparison becomes driven by the interpretation of the data collector rather than the stories of the culture being investigated. This is not to say that the interpretation of the data by the ethnographer is not encouraged, but videography allows for subjectivity to be more part of the data analysis, rather than the data collection.

Data presentation

If it is expected that the findings from the research cannot be conveyed in a manner that is easily expressed in traditional print format, capturing visual and auditory data is something to consider from the outset. For example, if one wished to analyse the culture of an organization in a foreign country, the use of videography could be beneficial in order to convey the different environment and cultural norms more easily than through print alone. If asked to express what New Delhi's streets looked and sounded like, I could write thousands of words and not do the site justice. Indeed, even video of the scene does not offer the plurality of senses that encompass the site, but it does offer a richer depiction of the setting than words alone. Similarly, if a researcher wishes to carry out research on Indian organizations, understanding the culture in which those organizations exist is necessary. Kozinets' (2002) work on the Burning Man Festival gives a wonderful insight into the world of counter-consumerism. Burning Man organizers state on their website: 'Trying to explain what Burning Man is to someone who has never been to the event is a bit like trying to explain what a particular colour looks like to someone who is blind' (www.burningman.com). In a context such as this, the use of video as part of the ethnography to accompany a printed article enables expression of far more about the culture than words alone. However, some regular attendees could attest that even the video is still insufficient compared as a proxy to visiting the festival and engaging with the culture of Burning Man.

Consequently, videography and filmmaking have become increasingly powerful means for ethnographers to capture and display the sites in which they operate and present data in a way that expresses greater visual and auditory nuance than enabled by traditional data formats. The aim of the videoethnographer is not to create an Oscar-winning documentary, but rather to use videography to aid ethnographic research. A certain level of quality is necessary to ensure that visual and auditory data can be analysed, but the key is to maintain the naturalness of the context. The following sections outline the necessary skills, equipment and technique for ethnographic data capture, analysis and dissemination.

The eye

The equipment necessary for videoethnography is relatively straightforward to use, but infinitely complex to master. Again, it is crucial to remember that the aim is to collect data suitable for analysis, rather than to create a blockbuster movie. The two major elements involved in this process are the researcher's eye and the filmmaking technology.

One element that distinguishes an excellent videoethnographer is his/her 'eye'. That is, his/her ability to notice what is important in a context, to focus upon that phenomena and capture it. Without a good eye, no amount of technology will improve the videoethnography. The filmmaker's eye is often discussed as an intangible gift that filmmakers have (Mercado 2010). However, it could be argued that researchers, especially ethnographers, have a similar gift that is honed and developed over time. Walcott (1999) argues that any ethnographer needs the intrinsic ability to see the world around him/her. Videography offers both a means of capturing what the ethnographer is focusing on, but also captures that which the ethnographer may not have seen while filming (Pink 2001). An ethnographer needs to be able to take an entire cultural setting, understand the setting and focus in on the nuances that make the site both interesting and relevant to a wider audience (Clammer 1984; Hammersley and Atkinson 1989; Rohner 1969). This is the eye. Taking a vast world of investigation and capturing it in a meaningful way that is likely to be of interest, both theoretically and theatrically, to a wider audience.

Without the researcher's or filmmaker's eye, the videography would simply be automated capture of experience. As discussed in the next section, this can be of interest and use, but the majority of meaningful videoethnographic data requires guidance from the researcher. Harnessing one's eye is as intangible as the concept itself. However, as a guide, the key is to focus not on capturing as much as possible, but to maintain a balance between capturing the site and the nuances within the site. For example, if one was to study the culture of an organization going through a cost-saving merger, the videographer could set the scene by focusing on the entire office. By doing this, he/she is able to capture interactions between participants, but at a distance. This offers benefits in showing movement, dynamism and, over time, repeated patterned behaviour. However, the wide-angle shot does not offer any depth as to what is contained within the interactions. An ethnographer who stands afar from a site can make assumptions of a culture from his/her own interpretation of the viewed experience, but, without engaging within the site, the ethnographer cannot gain the participants' own understanding of the phenomena (Schouten and McAlexander 1995). As such, wider capture of a setting, followed by many more focused captures of *interesting* aspects of the site is necessary. What is interesting is a matter of interpretation, at the discretion of the researcher. A deep fascination for a site is thus fundamental to videoethnography, but there is also a need for skills to effectively capture what is deemed fascinating.

The equipment

The technology needed to conduct a videoethnography must suit the purpose of the research. If the final aim is to make a mass distributed documentary with aesthetics at the fore, then high-quality, professional equipment is necessary. However, for most researchers, the balance between capturing data in an effective manner and not being too much of an imposition on the culture being investigated means that everyday consumer technology can suffice. The greater the intrusion, the greater the likelihood of researcher and social response biases entering into the study (Rohner 1969; White 1963). The key is to capture the moment. With High Definition Hard Disk Drive (HD HDD) cameras reasonably accessible to the public, this is the standard video camera used to capture the bulk of the data during a videographic study. However, sometimes it may be more appropriate to capture a novel and interesting phenomenon on a cell phone. Whatever your choice, having a device that will convert captured video and images easily to editing software, such as Adobe Premiere Pro, is also necessary for viewing data and editing the data into a film, if desired. The following is a short list of different videoethnographic purposes and the equipment used to capture each phenomenon.

Scene setting

When dealing with a new research site, one can often enter with relatively little knowledge of the setting or the behaviours that occur within it. One simple means to gather a large amount of data is to take a wide-angle shot of as much of a site as possible. This is excellent for understanding how a site operates as a whole, rather than focusing on smaller parts or functions. By seeing a culture operate as a whole, one is able to analyse the nuances and patterned behaviour as well as guide the researcher to see which areas to focus on first for deeper enquiry. Returning to the example of an organization undergoing a cost-saving merger, having a video or still images capturing as much of the organization as possible helps to understand the environment in which the participants operate. The pace of the office; the body language of the participants; the patterns of movement around the office; the areas where participants meet and converse;

the timing of behaviour; and general tone of the office would all be captured with some scene-setting shots. Again, these aspects could be captured with fieldnotes and researcher commentary, but with easy access to technology that can capture the data and not be subject to recall biases, which are filtered through the researcher's own cultural interpretation of the site. For me, this analysis should be reserved for when data is ready to be analysed, not at the data-collection stage.

Close analysis

From a wide angle, the areas of specific interest in a site can be ascertained. The researcher's eye will naturally be attracted to the specific sites for closer examination, at which point a closer shot should be taken and greater emphasis on the processual nature of a behaviour established. For example, if the researcher is focusing on certain types of behaviour, greater focus should be placed on not only the action itself, but also the process of how the action is carried out. Close analysis and capture aids in understanding not just the reason for the behaviour, but also the way in which the behaviour is carried out, which can often be hard for a participant to explain. For when I make breakfast, I usually just say 'I make breakfast', but videography of my morning pattern would yield far greater data about my behaviour, which can then be used for further analysis and interpretation.

One example of how videography can be used for close analysis comes from Starr and Fernandez's (2007) Mindcam methodology. Here, the researchers attach a covert camera to a participant and allow them to go shopping, while the camera films everything they see and examine. After the shopping experience, the participant is then interviewed while viewing their own footage to elucidate their thoughts and experiences. What makes videography so powerful, especially with this type of example, is that the participant is often unable to express their actions or unaware of their conscious actions until they are able to review the footage themselves. This is not to say that the Mindcam method is a replacement for close analysis in ethnography, but it is simply another way in which videography can be used to aid our understanding of a phenomenon. By drawing on video footage of behaviour, the participants are able to engage in a type of photo elicitation interview, where the participant is asked to explain their beliefs about a phenomenon based on the video-recording (Heisley and Levy 1991).

In an example from my research, an Indian bride was being adorned with matrimonial Henna (temporary tattoos) for the wedding ceremony. This was a key event in the wedding ceremony and a lot of attention was paid to the process by the family. During the ceremony, I was able to interview the bride, the Henna artist and the family members present to explain the symbolism, the rationale, the stories and the behaviour associated with the ceremony to get a rich set of data that was driven by the process. However, after the video had been captured, a number of other family members, who were not in attendance, were also shown the footage and their interpretation recorded to gain as much data as possible about the event.

Videography for interviews

Possibly the most common use of videography is for recording interviews. Video cameras can be used as a replacement for the traditional dictaphone to simply record the interview. However, far greater richness can be gained from a video interview, even if much of the time the participant is static or not engaged in any active behaviour. One key reason for using video for interviews is for analysis of body and especially facial language. A close analysis of not just *what* is said, but *how* a phrase is said gives greater emphasis and meaning to the interview. This is not

to say that videoethnographers must be expert in facial expressions and body language, but, if the data is collected, this level of analysis can be carried out retrospectively.

However, one major disadvantage of using videography during personal interviews is that many participants feel uncomfortable being filmed. Speaking into a video camera on a tripod with a radio mic attached to one's lapel, or in front of a large microphone, is a daunting experience for many interviewees. Relaxing a participant in a videography setting therefore becomes crucial. Two techniques that aid in this are the charisma of the researcher, as well as the ability to focus the participant away from the camera. This is expertly shown in Lastovicka *et al.*'s (2009) movie 'Can buy me love'. In this ethnography on consumers' attachment to loved possessions, the researchers spend time where participants feel most comfortable: among their possessions. When the researchers talk to car enthusiasts at a car show about their cars, many of the participants forget the camera exists and simply talk. Placing a video camera away from you, as the researcher, and filming on a slight angle, so that you are able to maintain eye contact with the participant is also helpful. By making the participant feel comfortable and keeping the focus away from the camera, it is more likely that a natural experience is recorded.

Another technique that can help keep the camera out of the participant's eye line is the *shoot from the hip* hold. If it is not possible to use a dedicated camera operator during an interview, placing the camera at one's side and filming on a wide angle or up, towards the participant's face, can aid in easing the nerves of the participant and maintain a strong connection between the researcher and participant. Naturally, this angle does not yield footage that would offer an aesthetically pleasing shot, but it is effective in capturing data and putting a participant at ease. It is especially useful when a number of quick interviews are being conducted at a site. For example, a Masters student of mine interviewed a number of people at a rock concert in Kazakhstan. It would have been impossible to interview people for much time, as their focus was on the music. At the same time, it would have been impractical to spend time easing a participant's nerves. As such, she carried the camera around with her and chatted to people as naturally as she could and recorded the data for future analysis. The quality of the footage, both visually and audibly, was poor, but sufficient for data analysis and the basis for depth interviews later in the study.

Covert videography

One ethically ambiguous form of videography is that of *covert* or undetectable capture. Covert filming is a topic of significant discussion in academia and the public media, with the increasing worries of a surveillance society (Lyon 2001). However, covert capture can offer a wealth of data that is free from researcher reactive effect or social desirability biases. That is, with covert capture, there is a lesser chance that participants will behave in a manner that they feel they should behave in, because they are being studied. By studying the patterns of shoppers in a retail environment, researchers are able to map transit routes, analyse how shoppers engage with different displays and determine how shoppers' interactions with employees may influence their retail experience. One exemplar of covert surveillance in academic research came from Jayasinghe's (2009) doctoral research on how families watched TV in their homes. By covertly filming their interactions, with the families' permission, Jayasinghe was able to capture a wealth of data for analysis. At first, a family may be aware that the camera exists in the room, but, as time passes, the camera is ignored and naturalistic behaviour ensues. Having a researcher in the room for weeks at a time, watching a family's behaviour, would be a significant imposition that a camera is able to avoid. Covert surveillance may not pass a University's Ethics Committee easily, as full disclosure and informed consent is often not present, but it does offer

advantages over traditional means of recording behaviour. If such behaviour did not offer any advantages, surveillance videography would not be used so heavily by the government, intelligence agencies or law enforcement. From a consumer research perspective, one can gain a lot of data from covert videography. However, it does yield a lot of unusable video footage and a lot of data that needs to be analysed without any understanding of why the behaviour is being carried out.

Videography analysis

Analysing videographic data is much the same as other forms of visual analysis. Many of these techniques are covered in depth in other chapters of this book. However, some analysis techniques are specifically valuable for the videoethnographer. This section will outline some of the key elements to focus on as an analyst of videoethnographic data.

The body

If engaging with human participants, the analysis of body movement, facial expression and gestures are necessary. Many of these are culturally specific and, therefore, cultural experts are needed to decipher expressions. For example, Italian participants are often known to communicate as much with hand gestures as they are with language (McNeill 1992); similarly, body movements in India are culturally specific in execution and meaning and often so subtle that they can be missed by the uninitiated researcher. One example of this comes from video I have collected with sufferers of eating disorders. When analysing transcripts from sufferers, one is able to understand the vocalized rationale and beliefs. However, when incorporated with body movement and facial expression, it is far clearer that some of the vocalized expression is actually ego defence mechanisms, designed to 'say the right thing', although they internally believe a different reality. That is, a sufferer may overtly say they know they are sick and need to gain weight, but physically look uncomfortable with such a statement and withdrawn from what they are saying. That is, they can be seen to be separating themselves from their words, although they know social response bias encourages them to 'say the right thing'. Such data would not have been collected from transcripts alone or audio recording. Analysing the body, in conjunction with the words, and watching this behaviour over time allow the researcher to gain a greater connection to the participants and their specific means of expression. It is important to maintain data integrity in one's interpretation of the data, and multiple coders and analysts are always recommended, especially in culturally specific phenomena. I have often learned much about a participant by reviewing an interview with an anthropologist or sociologist present, and recording their examination of body and facial expression. Collaborating with others who specialize in areas of body and narrative analysis allows the videoethnographer to gain a deeper appreciation of the presented material from a perspective that they had not engaged with previously.

The environment

The participant's interaction with their environment is also of importance in videoethnography. How a participant operates and moves through an environment or how their posture changes as the environment changes can all yield interesting phenomena for examination. For example, interviewing participants in their homes versus their workplaces, versus a neutral territory, even if the topic is the same, can yield very different results. Our identity can be affected by our surroundings and, as such, our concentration and focus change to suit the salient identity

(Forehand *et al.* 2002; Reed 2004; Veer *et al.* 2010). By conducting research in different environments and capturing the participant's interactions with the environment, another level of analysis is generated. An excellent organizational example of this can be seen in the cult movie *Office Space* (Judge 2009). Comparing the differences between the character's workplaces, home spaces and the local café shows the places and spaces where they feel able to express themselves in different ways. Without an appreciation for the impact that the environment plays on a participant's behaviour, much of the rationale for the behaviour may be lost.

Time

Finally, an appreciation for how a culture develops, behaviours change and participants express themselves differently as time passes is an additional benefit that videoethnography offers. By understanding the impact of how time passes for the participant and how the participant operates differently within a culture over time, the ethnographer gains a greater appreciation for the processual nature of the site. Of course, this is limited by the amount of time the researcher spends within the site, but, by offering a longitudinal perspective on the site, the researcher is able to understand more about the visualized and captured changes and how the changes impact the culture. My interviews with participants suffering from eating disorders were recorded over a period of years. Seeing their development and changes in their lives as some progressively improved, while others continued to struggle with the disorder offers a greater understanding of the individual and the phenomenon they are experiencing. In this research, old videos were not shown to participants, so as to not influence their recovery, but this is also a means by which time can impact the data collection and analysis. Interviewing participants as they reflect upon videos of their previous behaviour and interviews allows another level of analysis that can help a researcher better understand the participant's rationale and reasoning for their past behaviours.

Filmmaking

Again, rather than offering advice on how to create a film, which in such a short piece would be a disservice, I will focus here on how filmmaking can be adapted for academic purposes. Data capture in videoethnographic research does require footage to be of suitable quality for public viewing. However, if the researcher wishes to disseminate the research to a wider audience, there needs to be a balance between the theoretical and the theatrical (Kozinets and Belk 2006). That is, a wonderfully creative piece that is theatrically stunning, but offers little theoretical advancement is of little use as an academic piece that advances theory. However, a strong theoretical contribution without theatrical quality that would both entertain an audience and express the findings in a creative manner would likely not be received well as a film. Without theory, the ethnography lacks advancement; without theatre, the film becomes little more than a narrated article that could well be presented equally well via print.

Being able to translate videoethnographic data into a film appears, at first, a fun and relatively easy task. However, it is not easy. Creatively editing what could potentially be hundreds of hours of footage into a meaningful short documentary can be taxing and time consuming. Ensuring an outlet exists for your film can often be the first step in deciding whether a film is a necessary venture to undertake. The Association for Consumer Research has successfully run a film festival as part of their conferences and has received a number of excellent films that are both theoretically and artistically impactful.¹ Also, some journals accept video submissions as part of the traditional manuscript submission, such as the *Journal of Consumer Research*; *Consumption*

Markets & Culture; Qualitative Research; Advances in Consumer Research; and the Journal of Research for Consumers.

Yet there is a temptation among academics to create a film that replicates a paper format. That is, offering a brief introduction, an examination of the literature, followed by a method, and so forth. There is nothing explicitly wrong with structuring a film as an article, but one may question the reasoning for such an endeavour. Instead, it may be more in keeping with the benefits of film production to create a supplement to the academic article. That is, the article offers one view of the research, while the film offers another. By creating a film, the focus should be on the aspects that a film can offer that a paper cannot. That is, the film could concentrate on the visual and auditory cues and the dynamic nature of the site. The film can also focus on showing visual changes over time and the contrast between different cultural sites, which would be made more obvious through film than in a manuscript. A film that focuses on a person being interviewed in an office with no real visual or auditory appeal is, arguably, less relevant as a film. Film offers the ability to share a rich array of sound and visual data that cannot be communicated effectively or efficiently via text and this, in my mind, should be the domain where film excels. Using film simply because the technology is available is less effective, but mindfully using videography as a means of capturing a rich environment provides far greater depth to the setting and offers more data to be analysed.

A film, as with research, needs to have a story. The role of the filmmaker is to tell this story. The filmmaker is the creator of the narrative and the one who decides what will be included in the story and what will not. The ethnographer collects and analyses the data associated with a culture; the videographer collects video data in order to support data analysis; while the filmmaker creates the story that is then shown to others as a means of expressing some contribution of knowledge and/or entertainment. All three roles are very distinct, but often are carried out by the same person. When creating a film, it may be that the ethnographer needs to step aside and allow the creativity of the filmmaker to step in. Similarly, it may be the case that the filmmaker requires video footage that the videographer has not been able to collect and subsequent site visits are needed, not for analysis purposes, but for video footage recording to be used in the film. Traversing these multiple bodies and selves can be an interesting and often challenging experience.

The filmmaker can be a very passive voice in the film and allow the story to tell itself, or the film can be narrated. Whatever the choice of the researcher, the film will develop a story through the editing process. Editing footage in order to express an academic story is a laborious process, but an exciting one. As with a manuscript, peer review aids in refinement of the story; collaboration improves the quality of the film, and experience improves the efficiency of creating films. Watching other successful films, such as those recommended in this chapter, can improve your chances tremendously. The key is to maintain integrity of your participants, data and site in your film as well as to use the film to its fullest potential. Focus on those aspects that cannot be communicated effectively through print.

Conclusion

Filmmaking equipment is becoming so easily accessible that one could argue that all ethnography should incorporate some analysis of audio and visual data. However, I have argued here that having the right equipment is only one aspect of successful videoethnography. Without the researcher's eye, inquisitiveness and ability to effectively analyse visual data and use it to tell a story, it is unlikely that videography will add significantly to ethnographic consumer research. Consequently, the videoethnographer shapes the research process by guiding the camera and

controlling the collection and analysis of data. Even in covert video data collection, the ethnographer decides where the camera is placed and when they record. Videography is thus an interpretive process that relies on the ethnographer's training, experience and curiosity. Finally, there are times when videography is far more effective in capturing and disseminating data, and others when videographic data is unnecessary. Knowing the difference between the two is the first question the filmmaker should ask. If the site, context, theories and participants lend themselves to videography, there is no doubt that the ready accessibility of videographic equipment makes this a research opportunity not to be missed.

Note

1. A selection of videos shown at the film festival can be found at <http://vimeo.com/groups/136972>.

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