

Index

# Laboratoire d'ethnographie

Edited by

Patrick Boumard and Antonio L. Palmisano

## Qu'est-ce qu'un laboratoire d'ethnographie? Une introduction...

Antonio Luigi Palmisano p. 11

### What is an Ethnography lab? Just an introduction...

#### Abstract

The anthropologist returning from long periods of fieldwork often wonders how to break the solitude instituted by his newly acquired knowledge or presumed knowledge: "To whom to confide what happened on the field, even what can never be made public? With whom to continue the complex dialogue begun on the field and before? From whom to expect a critique as radical as it is creative?". The Ethnography lab is configured as the place and time in which if one does not find answers to many questions, one will find questions that will lead to many answers. In an era of reflexive deficiency, an era dominated by the *tekhné* and *main stream* thinking, the author argues, the Ethnography lab represents a kind of free zone in which to exercise reflexive criticism in all freedom of thought, with the certainty of receiving continuous food for thought, not keywords imposed by the dominant relations, i.e. by the administrative apparatus and bureaucratic diktats, often so harmful to the academy and the dialogical construction of knowledge. The case discussed by the author is the *Laboratoire d'ethnographie de Rennes*, France.

**Keywords:** Ethnography lab, dialogical anthropology, analyse institutionnelle, ethnométhodologie, fieldwork

## AH! DADA...

Jacques-André Bizet p. 23

### "DADA" Ride

#### Abstract

It is the functioning of the lab in the duration of its history that manifests its function. The collective of its members tells the diversity of their encounters with their different practices of ethnography. The reference to the institutional analysis enlightens the concept of implication. The internal self-analysis develops another dimension of the clinical approach. The diversity of the contributions around a shared object and an assumed ethnographic posture illustrates the fruitfulness of multi-referentiality. The concern to preserve strangeness materializes at the same time a theoretical principle, a practical obligation, and a political and ethical value. The perennality of the history of the lab in the form of the present collective puts at the heart of its understanding the concept of duration, which is able to account for the fact that it is an instituting device and not an instituted structure.

**Keywords:** institutional analysis, clinic, multi-referentiality, strangeness, posture

## **Quelques repères à propos du dénommé “laboratoire d’ethnographie de Rennes”**

Patrick Boumard

p. 31

### **A short story of our research group, also called “Laboratory of ethnography from Rennes”**

#### **Abstract**

Our research group is far from academic structures despite its university affiliation from 1993 to 2002 and since then its identity has evolved from School Ethnography to Ethnography of Education. It is part of a global philosophy with a critical stance on the pedagogy and the authority, with daily social life as the target of ethno-analysis.

I relate the various phases of many adventures of our group’s growth. The beginnings with the creation of a PhD seminar, then the recognition of an official laboratory within the University of Rennes, with an organization of the group in the mode of self-management, out of step and in conflicts with the other university teams. And from 2002 until now, an emancipation far from the official mighty places, with a research collective that is at the same time a friendly cenacle, a place of conviviality and exchanges, and the production of many scientific texts.

Our theoretical references stem from several roots, such as Institutional Analysis, Symbolic Interactionism and Ethnomethodology.

We never forget that every member of “the Labo” is his own author.

**Keywords:** self-government, methodology, paradigms shifts, authority, adventure

## **Échappé belle. Sortir de l’université pour retrouver le sens de la recherche**

Rose-Marie Bouvet

p. 43

### **Lucky escape. Getting out of the university to rediscover the meaning of research**

#### **Abstract**

My text is a testimony that compares my experience as a doctoral student in a traditional university research laboratory, where bureaucracy and power issues between mandarin professors prevented my formation as a researcher, with my experience in the “Labo” described in this issue of the Review, a “Labo” that I have not left since I understood that my identity as a researcher could fully develop there.

This text shows how, within this shifting group, the dimensions of conviviality and critical listening have nourished my involved ethnographic approach and built my responsibility as an author.

**Keywords:** comparison, bureaucratic research, research involved, user-friendly, emancipatory

## **Notre collectif? Un bouillon de culture, assurément!**

Claude Falgas

p. 51

### **Our collective? A cultural breeding ground, indeed!**

#### **Abstract**

The process of elaborating thought from an experience we have been through is necessarily tinged with our own personal perceptions and requires to be in touch with what’s alive within ourselves in the here and now. It took me a long time to differentiate clearly when people are talking in first person and when they are talking for the sake of talking. There is a certain quality people have when they are speaking from their core. And the process of letting this quality emerge is an energetic one.

Having myself marinated for a long time in the ethnography-oriented group led by Patrick Boumard, I am now convinced that the ordinary convivial relationships we have when our group meets are a good means to open ourselves to the diversity of what it means to be a human being living moment to moment. I also believe that they can be a stepping-stone for ways for our societies to evolve into less pathogenic directions.

I actually realized little by little that each person’s dynamics (mine included) require self-support in given situations, and that this self-support is the fertile ground in which thought and action can sprout and grow.

In addition, the act of “telling others about one’s experience” considerably helps elaborating reflection skills on one’s work for those whose jobs involve working with and adapting to life forces, such as salt marsh workers for instance.

Simply put, cultural breeding grounds have existed since the dawn of time and they are undoubtedly the way forward.

**Keywords:** Patrick Boumard, ethnography, cultural breeding ground, convivial, self-support, creative know-how from experience

## **Moi, ethnographe?**

Josette Gueguen

p. 75

### **I, an ethnographer?**

#### **Abstract**

I've tempted to analyse what the ethnography represents to me and how it's shaking me up in many domains in my life. First, I draw up a report of my teaching abilities when I discover the ethnography of education and I do insist most particularly on my mixed-ability class experience in the Mont d'Arrée who gave birth to a self-managed organisation. Going back to university and meeting with Patrick Boumard then with Michel Lobrot, Georges Lapassade and Guy Berger plus our work within the "lab" gave me strength to go further into my instructive but also linguistic, political, voluntary and personal commitments.

Important questions arise: what about ethnography? How could we make it available to all of those who fight in favour of a deep change in our society?

**Keywords:** ethnography, teaching method, shift, change, transformation, protest, contestation, self-managing

## **Ce labo, un sas des possibles**

Valérie Laudén

p. 93

### **This lab, an airlock of possibilities**

#### **Abstract**

How could a research laboratory participate in the work dynamics of professionals in the medical-social and health fields?

The author's testimony illustrates the encounter with a laboratory that could appear to be "on the fringe", but which in its effects brings ethnography to life, allows for encounters and research.

The author describes here, from his place, the function of a laboratory of ethnography and its effects on the production of research, but also and especially its impact in the dynamics of training of the actors of the medical-social, through the trainer.

**Keywords:** ethnography, life history, time shift, moments of possibilities

## **"Tourner autour" de l'ethnographie. Miscellanées**

Gilles Pinte

p. 107

### **Turning around ethnography. Miscellanea**

#### **Abstract**

How does someone mobilise ethnography in one's work, research or reflection? Based on the short life story of a researcher, the author proposes to understand his own relationship to ethnography. What were our motivations and feelings when we entered the laboratory? How do we define ethnography? What are our authors or theoretical/historical currents of reference? When and how do we use ethnography in our professional or personal lives? What is the place and the future of the scientific field of ethnography in research processes that tend to accelerate in a logic of standardisation? This is the subject of this article based on reflections from experiences, rich cultural diversity encounters, research and further complementary questioning.

**Keywords:** ethnography, life of a laboratory, life history, qualitative research, research process

## **L'ethnographie et les pièges du terrain**

Patrick Boumard

p. 123

### **About Field regarded as a trap**

#### **Abstract**

This paper rocks a paradoxical argument: that *terrain*, which is very often used as a specific ethnographic approach, is often sustained as a result of fashion. It is sufficient to proclaim that to build a *terrain* it is necessary to declare an ethnographic study. This article wishes to show however, the historical evolution of anthroposocial science, and that the work of terrain, which has permitted the pulling out of habits of abstract reflection, is little more than a simple incantation concerning the epistemological debate that one calls ethnography.

This is why the identity (distinction) between ethnography and terrain is deceptive. One often has to delineate between the opposing ideas in order to verify the hypothesis. The classic schema that unfolds in ethnography receives a given

understanding of *terrain*: ethnology is a synthesis of observations, and anthropology as a general theory to put everything together, affects it in this sense. However behind this apparent academic conformity hides the problem of the terrain, assimilated as the only domain of anthroposocial science, the spontaneous rejection of a realistic understanding of an implicit conception that says nothing about the necessary function of analytical theory.

A historical journey detailing the notion studied of the growing importance of the exotic terrain is transformed little by little in the study of qualitative research, completely transforming the debate which is handed over for the sake of knowing a positivist critical paradigm. This evolution binds with the Chicago School, but also finds reference to current British ethnography of education that contributes, in this field, to attack outdated understandings of standard quantitative sociology.

The French movement of institutional analysis has also contributed to bring an important criticism, introducing a link to the illusion that a simple understanding of terrain could provide sufficient proof. It is necessary to articulate observation, description and intervention in order to understand the question of terrain that cannot be fertile if it is relegated to the status of researcher in the constitution of the object of knowing, that is the implication.

The terrain is not merely a simple piece of evidence, a passport to justify the credibility of a study that dispenses with the need to have any analysis. Participant observation must be used, but only within the framework of symbolic interactionism, with the help of ethnomethodological radicalism. Here the description is not limited to an extrapolation of the observation. It gives a complex meaning to the question of intervention in institutional analysis. It is therefore a new conception of the field that we are proposing, far from the usual and banal meaning.

For interactionist ethnography, the field implies being analysed in its political dimension. It can only be understood in reference to an epistemology that is itself situated within a general philosophy, which refers to the phenomenological conception of the world.

**Keywords:** field, analysis, description, along the way hypothesis, epistemology