

Identity at Work and Play: Conducting Ethnography for Commercial Enterprise

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Ethnography is regarded somewhat suspiciously in the commercial sector.

It conjures up images of long periods of intensive fieldwork – an expensive investment for clients.

It's also used as a term to describe ALL qualitative research – everyone claims to do ethnography.

Popular methodologies

Quantitative data, and surveys are useful for learning about numbers, stats, trends, and retrospective information.

Focus groups are good for learning about attitudes, perceptions, discourse, and social climates.

Ethnography about building up a rapport, seeing things that people cannot articulate.

Ethnography examines everyday practices, real life contexts, and living situations that you can not explore or understand with other methods.



Expansion of the EU, challenging traditional practices, and emphasis on individual rights keeps identity and it's complexities in the headlines.

Jon Snow, broadcaster:
"I think Britishness has died off in my lifetime and nothing has replaced it. When I as a child, it was Winston Churchill, beefeaters and lots of pink on the globe. Now it's an irrelevant concept. Personally, I'm a Londoner living in Europe."

Linda Colley, historian: "The debate about Britishness is promoted by the extent of our post-war decline. We are no longer kept together by the need to fight wars, we are no longer all Protestants and we do not have the self-interest of belonging to a massive global empire."



Knowledge as a Social Construct

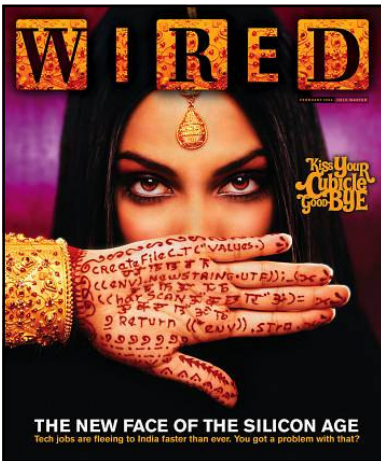


- Harding writes "all scientific knowledge is socially situated...neither knowers nor the knowledge they produce are or could be impartial...the challenge is to articulate how it is that knowledge has a socially situated character denied to it by the conventional view" (1991: 11-12).
- necessary to look at the forms and processes of *knowing* as well as what is known (Harding, 1986: 153)

- 'conscious partiality', Maria Mies
- 'skinfolk' and 'kinfolk', Zora Neale Hurston
- not about being an outsider but about power disparity



Observing local practices is gendered, identities are constructed for you to explain you - Woman/Canadian/Britisher/NRI/Sardarni – and can act as doorways



Being reflexive about the self is about exposing power relations and the way in which these relations shape knowledge.

Corporate Ethnography

Shifting identities underscore power dynamics and by exposing power dynamics as part of the research project, we can develop upon the findings.

- Intel Research, Digital Health Group, Ireland,
- Intel and health research
- Academic research at Intel
- Researching Mobility and Social Care



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