
METHODOLOGICAL APPENDICES

The following pages contain three methodological appendices. First, a discursive piece that described the ethnographic approach to gathering data for this study. It also serves to highlight some of the particular benefits and challenges associated with this research method and offers a description of the hermeneutic approach to data analysis. Second, I offer an anonymised example of a record from my data-set, from an early meeting of Sheffield Social Forum. Finally, I present an outline of primary data sources including discussions of documentary sources, email discussion lists and a list of interviewees and significant contacts who appear throughout the thesis.

1. ETHNOGRAPHY AND HERMENEUTICS

As explained in chapter one, an ethnographic methodology was utilised for this study because in enabling a strong focus on discursive interactions it offers particular benefits for the hermeneutic frame analysis developed in this thesis. The research subject for this study is a relatively novel one in several senses. Most obviously, it involves the examination of particular local instantiations of broader movements, where the particular location certainly hasn't been studied before. More importantly, the broader movements under study are, themselves, very recent developments. Because ethnography offers a flexible toolkit for research it is particularly suited for in depth explorations of novel subjects. It is particularly suited to the hermeneutic endeavour since it allows coding and recoding of data as hypotheses are developed, and is highly grounded in the context of interaction.⁷⁹⁹

Broadly, "ethnographic research employs three kinds of data collection: interviews, observation, and documents. This in turn produces three kinds of data: quotations, descriptions, and excerpts of documents, resulting in one product: narrative description."⁸⁰⁰ Ethnography implies a holistic approach to research that emphasises the importance of context on human interaction. In application, therefore, the relative

⁷⁹⁹ Baszanger, I., 1997, "Ethnography - Relating the Part to the Whole" in Silverman, D., ed., *Qualitative Research Methods*, (Sage, London.), p. 8-21.

⁸⁰⁰ Genzuk, M., 2003, "A Synthesis of Ethnographic Research" in *Occasional Papers Series. Centre for Multilingual, Multicultural Research*, (University of Southern California).

weighting of different elements vary according to the research context. Furthermore, while the classic texts of cultural anthropology have taken the form of detailed narrative description ethnography may be employed, as in this thesis, to produce data suitable for rigorous, theoretically informed analysis.

Data Collection

My observational fieldwork was wholly participative in order to optimise the benefits of the natural setting in reducing the effect of the observer on the observed. The following quotation summarises my approach:

“The task of the fieldworker is to enter into the matrix of meanings of the researched, to participate in their system of organized activities, and to feel subject to their code of moral regulation. Fieldwork is thus a complex interaction between researcher and hosts and is constructed in a process of give-and-take.”⁸⁰¹

There are four practical elements concerning fieldwork that require brief explication, all common features to ethnographic methods: defining the research population; gaining access; forms of observation and recording and interpreting data.

The research population for this study was initially defined as those people participating in alternative globalisation movement activities and limited to people based in Sheffield. Alternative globalisation activities were interpreted quite broadly with evidence of a critique of international financial or political organisations among politically active groups ensuring inclusion. I was interested, throughout, in structures of belief that led participants to social movement activities. The public meeting and public protest remain mainstays of political action in Sheffield, and as such, identification of the population of politically active individuals is relatively straightforward. To be sure, even ostensibly public activities may be poorly advertised, or sporadic. It was necessary, therefore, to develop a pre-existing network of contacts active in social movements, and to use a snowballing technique to discover activities and organisations that were of quite low visibility. The earliest phase of research was thus characterised by developing an awareness of what sorts of activities were taking place and ‘who was who’ within Sheffield’s protest milieu.

Since my fieldwork began in October 2001, two developments in Sheffield’s protest movements rapidly became apparent: first, that the anti-war movement would divert the energies of many, if not all, of those previously involved in contesting globalisation; second, the boundaries of the protest population were increasing. Early on, therefore, involvement in anti-war activities became a further signal of an individual being of

⁸⁰¹ Wax, M.K., 1980, “Paradoxes of ‘Consent’ to the Practice of Fieldwork” in *Social Problems* 27(3), pp. 272-3.

interest to the research project, independent of their having critical views on globalisation. As the numbers participating in demonstrations increased to several hundreds and then thousands I focused my attention at the organisational centres of the anti-war movement.

While public activities were a marker of inclusion among the research population, it was essential to access less public activities, in order to gain access to sufficiently detailed and open interactions. Public activity does not offer a reliable picture of the complex communicative processes of belief construction that go on 'behind the scenes'. Involvement in the everyday activities of political groups themselves is required to avoid simply hearing the voices of those who shout the loudest.

Through participation in public events it becomes relatively easy to slip into less formal and less public political activities. There are a variety of levels of publicity/formality that activities may take on. Protests and demonstrations are clearly the most public forms of activity, and a space in which activists may express their political beliefs. However, the messages of protests are characteristically simplified to slogans displayed on banners or placards or shouted through a megaphone. At a slightly less public level is the open planning meeting. The organisations at the centre of the anti-war and social forum movements typically announced their planning meetings quite publicly and were enthusiastic about newcomers. Participants in such meetings were aware of their public nature and in the larger meetings the atmosphere was sometimes one of strangers with a common cause, limiting the openness of interactions. Indeed, as suggested in chapter seven, some participants in the anti-war movement found such meetings intimidating and thus saw them as limiting discussion.

It is through willing participation in the work of social movements that one becomes more deeply involved in the informal activities of protest networks. Tasks decided on in meetings needed more or less formal subgroups to carry them out, or individuals would have particular projects in which they invited participation. It was often in small groups making banners or decorations, distributing leaflets or posters, collecting petition signatures or drafting publicity text that I found some of the most stimulating and apparently honest descriptions of people's political beliefs. Such activities routinely led to more informal settings (commonly individual's houses or pubs) where in-depth political discussions emerged.

Observation in all of these settings can take more or less active forms, aimed at different kinds of data. Additionally, different forms of observation were conducive to different forms of data recording. Typically, I utilised public protests to gauge the range of participation in movement activities and to network. However, at times the forms of protest held their own message, as did the anti-consumerist demonstrations noted in

chapter four. Usually however, discussions with individuals at demonstrations were generally fairly short and did not examine political beliefs in any great depth. Planning meetings generally provided the opportunity to experience the politicking of contention within coalitions, most clearly expressed in the ESF planning described in chapter eight. At times open and forthright discussion proved insightful or surprising, while at others they appeared to coast down well-worn tracks. Both of these facts comprise useful data since the latter demonstrates points of argumentation that have some continuity in the interaction of orientational frames. In meetings, making observational notes *in situ* was usually possible; since it is not unusual for people to be making notes during meetings there is no damage done to that naturalness of the setting. In smaller meetings where my own note taking might be more conspicuous I would often volunteer to take minutes, thus allowing me to make my own notes at the same time.

Less formal research settings offered a greater variety of observational data but less opportunity to make notes directly. At times the content of political discussions was lively and interesting. It was often profitable not to intervene in the discussion too much; to borrow the words of one classic ethnographic study, “as I sat and listened, I learned the answers to the questions that I would not even have had the sense to ask.”⁸⁰² At other times, however, it was valuable to take a more active role, probing the structures of people’s ideas. It became possible to perform very informal interviews or focus groups wherein I would have a mental list of questions or discussion topics. There were around fifty Sheffield-based activists, with a range of political perspectives and levels of involvement, with whom I had such partially-planned discussions. Preserving the naturalness of the setting, I would rarely interject and only record answers later on from memory. Occasionally, if one person put a point with particular clarity or profundity I would ask permission to record it. I found that this technique could work with one-to-one or very small group discussions where conversants knew each other very well, but tended to ‘de-rail’ conversations in larger or less close groups. Observation notes from these various settings were frequently typed up and, along with initial interpretations, entered into a Microsoft Access database that will be described shortly. Initial interpretations tended to make intuitive comparisons with other periods of activity or indicate questions raised for further examination.

In addition to conducting observational data I conducted twelve recorded and transcribed interviews with highly-active individuals. Interviewees were selected through ‘judgement sampling’; that is, reliable, well-informed individuals were chosen

⁸⁰² Whyte, W.F., 1943, *Street Corner Society. The Social Structure of an Italian Slum*, (University of Chicago Press, Chicago).

for specific reasons. The majority of interviews were conducted towards the end of the data collection period. By this point I had a strong impression of the contents of orientational frames identified in the research. However, the interviews were conducted with a minimal script based on questions about specific events or very broad political topics so that they would form a valid check on interpretations I had already made. Because of the nature of data transcription, interviews offer a more reliable record of individuals' speech and as such, have been utilised as a more precise presentation of particular connections in particular frames.

Furthermore, a number of individuals were chosen who appeared 'untypical' in their political views, readily crossing boundaries between the frames identified. Indeed, the results of these interviews confirmed that people could be both creative and inconsistent with their use of frame elements. This tended to involve a 'topic shift' in the conversation so it appears that for some topics respondents were utilising one frame, by connecting meanings associated with that frame together. On a separate topic, later on, they may utilise several elements of another frame. This result is consistent with the theoretical move of abstracting the frames from individual discourse because of the 'priming' effect of particular ideational contexts. It also helps to justify the long-term, ethnographic methodology that enabled an exploration of the particular areas of application of the different frames. Two exceptions to the interpretation-checking rationale were used. Interviews with 'Isadore' and 'Scot' took place mid-way through the research period. Here the concern was partly to check facts about the direct action elements of the anti-war movement, whose activities were more geographically dispersed and less well advertised and therefore harder to keep track of. I also hoped that these interviewees might willingly act as a gateway to sections of the local protest scene with which I was less involved, and which were inherently less open. This strategy was largely successful, with increased integration into particular groups resulting from their better knowledge of my research subject.

Managing Research Relationships

The position I began studying from was not as a complete stranger but rather as someone on the peripheries of several political networks. While I was known to some participants I was a newcomer to others, and therefore my process of integration into the protest milieu broadly resembled the process that every social movement activist has been through. As indicated above access to many events and groups was relatively easy. Together with the quite rapidly changing population of social movement activists this can throw up a complex question of when and how to disclose the nature of my research to individuals. There is a clear ethical and practical demand not to use an individual for one's own research ends without them being aware of the fact. When

meeting in small groups where some participants were unknown to each other organisers very frequently suggest a 'go-round' of introductions where individuals generally say something about their political experience or affiliations. I made use of these to make people aware of my research and ask if anybody objected to my presence. Although I was occasionally asked not to make any public record of a meeting, a rule I have adhered to rigidly, I was never asked to leave a group. However it was less practical to interrupt proceedings of a larger and more public character. I made it a rule of thumb that in more public activities I would not try to introduce my research to the whole group, and any data gathered would relate only to people who knew about my research. Where I was unsure to what degree events were open, and where there were participants to whom I was unknown I would take time to introduce myself and my research to them.

A further relationships issue relates to the maintenance of naturalness in the research setting. In consciously seeking to examine the multiplicity of worldviews within the 'movement of movements' I was concerned not to appear committed to any particular segment of the movement. At times this involved limiting my participation in discussions or through not taking part in certain activities. An obvious example would be that selling copies of the Socialist Worker newspaper would change my relationships with others in the protest scene. However, this also obviously limits the degree to which you are seen as a member of any particular group. Since my primary research interests were coalitional organisations in the anti-war and social forum movements this did not necessarily limit the availability of useful interaction. However, even in coalition settings, the lack of commitment to one strand of the movement did not go unnoticed. For instance, in a pub discussion after a long and somewhat fractious meeting of the Sheffield Social Forum, 'Jasper' said to me, "So come on, what exactly are you? Are you an anarchist, or a trot or a wishy washy liberal or what?" While I paused to consider my answer, 'Edgar' beat me to it with, "He's an academic".⁸⁰³ The fact that this was a good-natured exchange, received with humour by others present reassures me that in the coalitional context of the SSF, at least, my identity as a researcher was quite acceptable. However, this describes a potential limit to the naturalness of settings in which I was present, though I saw little evidence that any participants would curb their explanations of political positions or activities on account of my presence.

The limit to commitment is, however, an essential element of the level of objectivity that this thesis seeks to achieve. Both my choice of a theoretical approach that sought to stress the intellectually creative character of social movement activity, and to do so

⁸⁰³ Field notes, February 2004.

within movements confronting globalisation and war (rather than, say, British nationalist movements) give some indication of my pre-existing affinity with the movement of movements. This was an affinity brought about by respectful interest rather than absolute commitment to one political position or another. In order to maintain objectivity between these positions it was important to balance participation within a range of sub-groups within the wider movements. Objectivity for the study as a whole, however, is dependent on a rigorous and systematic approach to data analysis.

Data Analysis

The interpretation of data sought to trace the hermeneutic circle between parts and whole described in chapter one. Practically this required an ability to interpret and reinterpret texts gathered from a range of sources. It had to be possible to focus on particular parts of the text without losing the wider context. I created a database using Microsoft Access because it is a highly flexible application with very powerful search functionality. Short texts were entered whole and longer texts (over about 500 words) were split into multiple, linked records. So, for instance, interview transcripts were typically split down by individual questions. Each record contains category and source information, similar to common bibliographic software. Further each had keywords assigned from a standard list that was regularly checked and updated against new interpretative directions. Each also had an open text area for entering interpretative comments. Where reinterpretations were added at a later date, the date would be included in the text. Because the original text and my own comments are displayed side-by-side comments could be attached to sub-sections of the text, much like marking up paper copies. An example from my field notes is included below. Finally, texts within the database might be related directly to others, ensuring, for instance, that a number of emails responding to each other remained connected. In total, the database for this research project contains over 3,000 records.

Using keywords and comments texts went through several of layers of coding. A first layer highlighted the functions that particular arguments or ideas fulfilled within the larger text; for instance, they might be justifications for action, reports on protest events, criticisms of the state and so on. A second layer of coding was created with keywords denoting the general subject matter of those particular arguments. Examples include democracy, power, environment or justice. A third layer of coding assigned keywords according to reading of the whole text. Rather than beginning with the three orientational frames described in this thesis I began with a much greater range of political positions by which texts might be loosely categorised, generally referring to self-interpretations of the individual speakers or authors or to the language they themselves used. All of these forms of coding were essentially considered as flags for

subsequent searches. Coding was used flexibly given the developmental character of both the phenomena themselves and of my own interpretations. I utilised longer commentary added to the text to indicate broader thoughts about its significance within the developing interpretations of the movement of movements.

There are two notable advantages to using a computerised database. First, it is possible to store many different types of data together, so they can be integrated into a richly textured artefact representing the phenomenon being studied, yet be easily disassociated for independent analysis. Second, and more important, is the ability to create sophisticated searches quickly. Microsoft Access offers almost unlimited flexibility in this regard. For instance, searches can take in one, several or all fields in each record; it can search for sets of synonyms, words that appear together or words to exclude. The results may be ordered by speaker or author, by frequency of keywords appearing, by date and so on. This flexibility proves useful in examining hypotheses and getting different views on the meaning of concepts. Sets of records can be generated that all relate to sets of keywords, offering a range of different angles, that can be subdivided in various ways. Final coding was performed on printouts of data sets relating to particular themes, drawing out representative quotations for presentational use. These techniques were used repeatedly to examine the connections between concepts found in the dataset as a whole. To the degree that they facilitated the total immersion of the researcher in the data, they performed the same function that ethnographers have always sought from data analysis.

2. EXAMPLE OF DATA RECORD FROM FIELD NOTES

Source Type	Field Notes	Date	Thurs, 03/07/03
Title	Sheffield Social Forum Public Meeting		
Comment	First big public meeting, called by members of Workers' Power		
Description	Interpretations		
<p>An interesting meeting with about 35-40 participants from a wide range of backgrounds, both political and social. 'Gareth' of Revo/WP chaired but emphasised that the chair should rotate.</p> <p><i>Background:</i> many different groups of people had been discussing the fact that a social forum might be useful in shef, but no-one had got around to organising the initial meeting. 'Everyone' knew that the SWP were against social forums in Britain.</p> <p>Workers Power had made a proposal to the StWC to set one up which was narrowly defeated. On advertising this meeting, they mentioned this, drawing one DA activist to ask why all political activity suddenly had to go through the StWC.</p> <p><i>Meeting:</i> 'Hamilton' had handed out a list of campaign positions in very rough form which he thought might be a starting point for debate. Before the meeting had started some people were already saying that wasn't the way they wanted it to go.</p> <p>The meeting itself started with a go-round introducing ourselves and saying what we thought a social forum should be. (my research introduced) SWP turnout of five members suggested that they were at least concerned to see how it would go. Many 'usual suspects' but also some new faces, some of whom were young professionals, one academic, one anarchist bouncer.</p> <p>Some argued that SSF had to be more than a talking shop, leading to some form of action. The SWP said they supported SFs in principle, but slated the Durham SF and claimed that so few people here couldn't be representative generally. I don't remember any SWPers actual description of what they would like to see in a SF except that it should mobilise for ESF. (In discussion, 'Floyd' was arguing that because those who turned up to the first meeting weren't representative we couldn't start putting out publicity with the words 'social forum' on. It was universally agreed that we weren't currently in a SF but that we had to push for it even if we left it open even what form it would take. 'Newton' walked out calling Alan crass,</p>	<p>That 'everyone' was from a WP member, usual rivalry between the groups evident.</p> <p>02/06/05 – Given a shared frame, even more puzzling that SWP and WP have so much rivalry – explain.</p> <p>This StWC process is what happened with the Manchester People's Assembly, which started earlier than SSF, but was also begun by WP activity. DA activist not impressed because of influence of traditional leftists in StWC?</p> <p>02/06/05 - SSF drew in many people not obviously aligned to other political groups – looking for something new? i.e. something not already tied to an obvious ideology.</p> <p>Isadore always argues the 'no talking shop' point, almost as a reflex, but is always willing to turn up to meetings even when there's no specific action on the agenda.</p> <p>02/06/05 – The 'action' specification of DA frame also shared with RS frame in this instance.</p> <p>The Floyd-Newton argument was really just a bit of a sideshow because most people in the room really wanted some sort of SSF that had its own focus away from the ESFs.</p>		

<p>which was the most tense moment.) A few had a vision of an alternative political apparatus to the state machinery that could make statements and galvanise opinion and action. A few had a much more skeletal vision of a repeated networking opportunity. (This is roughly how the two positions were summarised by 'Hamilton' at one point.) There was one suggestion of taking up a campaign against racism immediately to get out the 'brand image' of the SF, but this was quite thoroughly put down.</p> <p>It wasn't really clear whether there was to be a grand SF in a conferences, workshops style or just regular meetings growing gradually in size. There was some suggestion of going to local fairs to advertise. There was some discussion of the working classes, but 'Adelaide' managed to ridicule that in the nicest most unassuming way possible by saying that she was middle class and felt in no way capable of raising the consciousness of the working class as it was patronising and wouldn't work. There was much talk of having a local focus and also much talk of inclusivity.</p> <p>WP's suggested campaign positions were discussed with a general feeling that while those positions (against oppression, against racism, for equality) might be fine, they didn't offer a direction for action, and didn't offer the members of the groups to shape the politics of the group.</p> <p>In terms of concrete practicalities, we discussed the next meeting, someone suggested getting people from successful local SFs to talk to us, as there's no point 'reinventing the wheel', this was pretty universally agreed. Subgroups were set up for outreach to community groups, and for general publicity and for organising the next meeting.</p>	<p>02/06/05 – Frame-wise, its particularly interesting to see how people line up on these positions, which have been argued at many other meetings, the former clearly fits better with the RS frame, the latter with DA frame – lots of quotes from email lists confirm these ideas.</p> <p>All of the participants were anti racist so why not do the anti-racism campaign? For SWPers it was a matter of declaring the SSF prematurely, similar argument from many was inclusiveness - need to get more people included in group before setting priorities, for others it was that there were already groups focusing on racism, it was a 'big headline issue' but SSF should focus more locally.</p> <p>Class analysis only really used by SWP and WP, so obviously not convincing to others in the room. 02/06/05 – Given large number of people not aligned to RS frame, its clear, in hindsight, that SSF would never be built with a shared view of class oppression, nevertheless notion of inequality has remained central throughout. Evidence that all frames utilised have equality as a central value, just differently understood.</p> <p>'Outreach' subgroup re-emphasises focus on inclusion.</p>		
Topic 1	SSF	Topic 2	Local SFs
Topic 3	Purpose	Topic 4	Exclusion/Inclusion
Related URL	http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sheffieldsocialforum/		
Related Documents	All following SSF meeting reports; relevant Indymedia coverage; SSF email list content.		

3. OUTLINE OF PRIMARY DATA SOURCES

Where electronic copies of primary data sources were available these were stored within an appropriate category in the Access database described above. Otherwise, basic information about important documents was added as a record to the database along with any key quotations or full transcriptions, a short list of keywords and any interpretative comments.

Documentary Sources

Print and web documents explicitly cited in the thesis are listed in the bibliography. A large number of different documentary sources are available from within the movement. I frequently used the following types of documentary information, integrating interesting texts into my database.

- Activist news websites, e.g. *UK Indymedia*, *Sheffield Indymedia*;
- Activist newsletters, e.g. *Schnews*;
- Socialist newspapers, e.g. *Socialist Worker*, *Workers' Power*;
- 'Alternative' news weeklies and monthlies, e.g. *New Internationalist*, *Red Pepper*;
- SMO and NGO websites, e.g. *World Development Movement Website*;
- Educational materials aimed at social movement, e.g. *Seed for Change Training Packs*;
- Informational leaflets and flyers obtained at protest events.

Email Discussion Lists

The degree to which an email discussion lists may be considered a public space can be difficult to determine. While the contents of messages sent to lists may be archived on public pages of the internet, more commonly they require a username and password to view. The two most important email discussion lists throughout the research were those attached to Sheffield Against War and the Sheffield Social Forum. For most of the period of research the latter was publicly archived whereas the former was only available through a subscription. Since the SAW email list is, to a degree, a private space, I have only used quotations from that list where the person quoted had knowledge of both my research area and the fact that I was on the list. In addition a wide range of public and password-controlled email lists around specific campaigns (e.g. *Disarm DSEi*), organisations (e.g. *WDM*) or networks (e.g. *DemocratiseESF*) were subscribed to throughout the research period. These served as useful sources of information about events, and form part of the background to understanding the movement, since many local activists will also be subscribers. However, there is a genuine danger of information overload from subscribing to multiple email lists. In the context of this research emails I considered relevant, and therefore transferred to my

database, were those that were from local protest participants and formed part of genuine political debates.

Interviewees and Significant Contacts

All interviewees and significant contacts are referred to by pseudonyms chosen using an arbitrary process. The only information retained by the pseudonyms is gender. The following lists significant Sheffield-based contacts with whom I had frequent interaction over the research period, and whom I explicitly cite in the thesis. I indicate whether I worked with them primarily during the anti-war movement (AW), the social forum movement (SF) or both. Where contacts also participated in more formal, recorded interviews I note the date that the interview took place below.

Adrian	AW & SF
Al	SF
Basil	AW & SF
Bee	AW
Callista	AW & SF
Daniel	AW; interviewed, July 2004.
Darrell	AW & SF
Edgar	AW & SF; interviewed, February 2005.
Eldon	AW; interviewed, February 2005.
Florence	SF
Floyd	AW & SF
Gareth	AW & SF
Gavin	AW
Giles	AW
Graham	AW
Hamilton	AW & SF
Hardy	AW & SF; interviewed, December 2004.
Harriet	AW & SF; interviewed, December 2004.
Isadore	AW & SF; interviewed, May 2003.
Jasper	AW & SF
Joe	AW & SF; interviewed, January 2005.
Kara	AW & SF; interviewed, December 2004.
Kelvin	SF
Kenneth	SF; interviewed, January 2005.
Larry	SF; interviewed, July 2004.
Leanne	AW
Madeline	AW & SF

Manuel	SF
Orson	SF; interviewed, December 2004.
Pete	AW
Rafe	SF
Scot	AW & SF; interviewed, May 2003.
Zack	SF