

# Introduction

*Miriam Boeri and Rashi K. Shukla*

*LOOKING FOR ONE OF THE WOMEN IN MY ethnographic study on suburban women who use methamphetamine, I drove with my research assistant to the rundown trailer park where I first saw her attempting to clean a derelict trailer so she could live in it with her son. Finding the stench of dog excrement and rodent droppings too overwhelming, she accepted an offer from a man in the park to live with him in another trailer that had also seen better days. I was worried when no one answered the door and became anxiously aware that the park seemed almost deserted. Hearing sounds from people at the back of the trailer park, which was situated between a lonely country road and the railroad tracks, I drove my car to the end of the dirt and gravel path. As I noted a dismal scene of abandoned rusty tin boxes that served as homes but with no signs of the living, it became evident that the former inhabitants were no longer around; however, my desire to find my study participant made me push on.*

*“Stay here,” I told my assistant. He was a young man with enough life experiences to make him a valuable helper to my study, but I did not want both of us to be in a vulnerable position. As I continued by foot to where I heard loud talking, I turned the corner and saw beer cans littered around four men with their chests bared to the warm evening. Old motorcycles were parked behind them. One man looked up when he heard my steps, and, unbuckling his pants as he walked toward me, called out in a slurred voice, “You ready to fuck?” I remember feeling disgusted at the sight of dirty grey underwear, and backing up slowly while keeping my eye on him, I yelled out to my assistant, who I could hear walking toward me on the gravel, “Get back to the car. Don’t come down here!” (Paraphrased from field notes, Miriam Boeri)*



FIGURE 0.1. Deserted trailer park in one of the field sites where the women lived when temporarily homeless. Photo credit: Miriam Boeri.

I got in my car and we left without incident. Later, I found the woman I had been looking for. She told me that the group of men I met there had called a sex worker to come down to the trailer park where they often partied after work. They probably thought I might be her. She told me this in the matter-of-fact way that indicated scenes like this were part of her everyday life.

In retrospect, that time in the deserted trailer park was a potentially dangerous situation, but most of my fieldwork is more like the day I drove for two hours and sat two more hours in a parking lot waiting for a scheduled interviewee to show up, only to have his “spies” come by to check me out first. I eventually ended up interviewing both the spies and the man who sent them,

who became one of my trusted community consultants. Reflecting on similar experiences, I remember feeling more despair for the people I met than any fear for the sometimes risky situations I encountered.

Facing potential risks, learning to assess the situation quickly, and finding trusting and trustworthy participants are part of conducting ethnographic fieldwork among people who are hard to study. These are some of the challenges discussed in these chapters, described by ethnographers who overcame barriers and addressed unanticipated obstacles to their research among hidden populations.

## ETHNOGRAPHY'S CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

What are the challenges associated with studying deviant, stigmatized, or criminal behaviors in the field? What happens when the best-laid plans go awry? How do ethnographers address Institutional Review Board (IRB) demands or lack of funding? This collection illuminates strategies employed in studies on stigmatized and illegal behaviors that take researchers into largely uncharted landscapes. Written for practitioners, academics, and students, the study snapshots presented in each chapter provide insights on the types of strategies and techniques utilized to address real-life difficulties and obstacles faced when using ethnographic methods.

The one common thread across the chapters is their focus on hidden and marginalized categories of people, often considered vulnerable populations. These include people who are incarcerated or formerly incarcerated, use illegal drugs, suffer from intergenerational poverty and structural inequality, have health issues or transmittable diseases, or engaged in activities that are unconventional in contemporary society. Understanding their experiences and representing their reality through ethnographic research takes empathy and compassion, but it can also take an emotional toll.

Ethnographic research is indispensable for an in-depth understanding of behaviors that are stigmatized, criminal, or considered deviant and often enacted in secret. However, what ethnography is and how to do it is debated even among the most successful ethnographers. Much of what happens while in the field is not revealed in print. Novice ethnographers wonder what to do when they face difficult situations they never read about in textbooks, while more experienced ethnographers remain anxious about how much they should reveal and to whom.

The purpose of this book is to reveal true-to-life challenges encountered during fieldwork that are rarely discussed in print. The ethnographers writing these chapters are using research methods outside the safety and comfort of clinical or academic settings. With raw honesty and introspection, they examine their own misgivings, sharing how they met, addressed, and overcame unanticipated challenges. They write contemplatively and deliberately, sometimes disclosing the emotional highs and lows experienced, other times offering judicious advice on how to avoid pitfalls and remedy missteps that may occur while in the field.

The diversity of the projects discussed is one of the strengths of this book. Ethnography is characterized by heterogeneity, flexibility, and adaptation; methodological strategies are adjusted for particular fields. The parameter of the studies described here were influenced by a number of factors, including the availability of resources and logistical constraints, among other considerations. Levels of experience and access to team members with diverse skills impacted the types of decisions made before, during, and after fieldwork.

Ethnographic methods rely more heavily on the experiences and instincts of the researcher than methods requiring a rigid adherence to standard data collection protocol and techniques of analysis. While both qualitative and quantitative data may be collected, the ethnographer becomes the tool of data collection (Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte, 1999). Since ethnographers are not constricted by standardized procedures, they can make modifications when their plan is revealed to be flawed or when they discover new information that alters their direction. Such liberty is invigorating for many researchers, but it can also be intimidating for some, and perhaps frightening for newcomers.

The stories shared on these pages are meant to educate, inform, and inspire current and future researchers who find themselves motivated to engage in ethnography. The lessons and insights provide important information for those seeking to get close to people and behaviors in field settings. Ethnography can be practiced in a variety of ways within different disciplines, but it essentially involves in-depth interactions with people in settings where they live, work, or play.

While there is not one definition to pin to ethnographic methods, what counts as “real” ethnography is often debated (Agar, 2006). The variety of methods described throughout these chapters can be categorized by different labels. Those adhering to a traditional approach to ethnography might question if some of these studies are under an ethnographic umbrella. Is Robert Gay’s study of life in a Brazilian favela as narrated by two of its members over

thirty years an oral history or an ethnographic study? Does Eugene Soltes's examination of convicted executives count as ethnography or a case study? Ethnographic convention and styles change over time (Van Maanen, 1988, 5–6), and authoritative statements of what constitutes ethnographic research are ephemeral.

Ethnography adapts. Ethnographic research occurring within contexts of change and technological advancements presents difficulties and challenges, while also offering opportunities to invent new strategies that push ethnography beyond its traditional boundaries. Research methods cannot remain stagnant and be relevant, and ethnography is no exception. Flexibility is critical for advancing scientific knowledge on hidden populations. As shown in these chapters, contemporary ethnographers triangulate different methods, incorporate new technologies, and develop rapid forms of ethnographic research as they adapt to new fields and emerging problems.

### *Triangulation*

Triangulation of data from various sources of information enhance efforts to understand complex human behaviors and provide researchers with additional avenues for assessing the validity of their research findings. While some of these data sources will be generated directly from study participants who are interviewed, observed, or who otherwise participate in research, as these studies demonstrate, there are more often than not multiple slices of data about any given problem. Each slice of data or indicator potentially provides unique or comparative information on the issue or problem being studied. Advancements in science and technology mean that scholars of this era have more opportunities for the types of information gathered and analyzed as part of an ethnographic approach.

Triangulation has been defined as the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, as well as combining different strategies of data collection and analysis (Creswell and Clark, 2007; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Malterud, 2001). Most ethnographers use multiple strategies in their ethnographic studies, or they combine ethnographic methods with other research methods. Mixed methods of data collection produce diverse kinds of data. All sources of data are limited and have potential flaws, but through triangulation of data, the view becomes clearer and more precise (Boeri, 2007).

The chapters in this book illustrate triangulation of different data and diverse methods. In his research into prison deaths, Joshua Price discusses the

triangulation of disparate sources that involved government documents, health records, letters, online messages, and notes from secret meetings. Addressing the problems of what legally counts as criminal evidence, he confronts the “arbitrariness” and validity of these disparate documents. Are letters evidence? Are stories told to us evidence?<sup>1</sup> Are they less or more valid depending on their source? Why are stories told by a correctional officer evidence when stories from the prisoner or his/her family not considered evidence? His questions resonate with ethnographers who are challenged on the veracity of their sources and the validity of the data they use to support their arguments.

### *Incorporating Technology*

Many of the contributors integrate alternative sources of information using traditional and more modern technologies. Heith Copes used photography to contextualize stories in his study of people in rural areas who use methamphetamine. Ana Lilia Campos-Manzo asked her young subjects to take virtual tours of their neighborhoods via Google maps, allowing the images to stimulate their memories as they narrated their stories. Price obtained information critical to his study on prison deaths via social media outlets such as Facebook posts and text messages. Using ethnographic findings in an intervention project, Avelardo Valdez, Alice Cepeda, and Charles Kaplan visually projected public health messages on town walls in community spaces, further illustrating the innovative and creative use of technology in their applied ethnographic study.

As researchers adapt their project design to incorporate new technologies, the notion of observation moves beyond traditional physical observation to include diverse forms of direct or indirect observation. Jason Fessel, Sarah Mars, Philippe Bourgois, and Daniel Ciccarone filmed videos of injecting activity to better study the sequence of injection behaviors. Marie Rosenkrantz Lindegaard started with traditional ethnographic methods, such as living in the communities where her population lived, talking with families and friends, and conducting interviews, but her methodological strategies were modified as the research revealed unexpected sources of data, such as the video recordings from the local television stations.

### *Rapid Ethnography / Rapid Assessment*

Beyond the more traditional form of ethnography involving extended periods of time in the field, some of the ethnographers adopted a form of rapid



ethnography. Rapid ethnography is used when there is a need for a quick assessment of an emergent problem, and it is particularly important for assessing social issues when they occur among people engaged in covert behavior.

Merrill Singer and J. Bryan Page discuss how they used “Rapid Assessment for Response and Evaluation (RARE)” in their studies among people who inject drugs to prevent the spread of HIV and hepatitis C infection (HVC). Fessel, Mars, Bourgois, and Ciccarone describe their rapid-assessment strategy as “focused short-term ethnography” to gain insider perspectives. Addressing the criticism of rapid ethnography, the authors show, for example, that contrary to what some critics say, ethnographers *can* gain trust and rapport with participants using this rapid ethnographic method.

## RECRUITMENT CHALLENGES

Using a variety of recruitment strategies is a time-honored tenant of ethnography, and many of the more established recruitment methods are illustrated by contributing authors here. Less transparent recruitment processes, such as covert research, are examined critically from different perspectives. Also discussed are the different ways to involve people drawn from the community in the research process. Some authors employed people from the study population as part of the research team; others describe “gatekeepers” who helped with recruitment efforts or facilitated their entry to hidden settings where participants could be more easily recruited.

### *Covert Research or Concealment*

Contributors had differing views on ethnographic covert roles. Elizabeth Bonomo and Scott Jacques candidly describe the covert ethnography conducted by Bonomo for her dissertation research. Bonomo chose to conduct covert research, which her supervisor, Jacques, did not recommend but did not discourage either. According to the authors, “a dissertation is about establishing yourself as an independent scholar, so it has to be a road mostly travelled alone . . . guidance [Jacques] did provide followed a few general principles: don’t get hurt; don’t violate our Institutional Review Board (IRB) agreement; otherwise, do what needs to be done to finish the project, to the best of your ability, in a timely manner.” Bonomo finished her dissertation

project, eventually disclosing her research motives to the people she studied, learning critically important lessons about ethnography through firsthand trial and error.<sup>2</sup> She discusses this experience with insightful detail, making her chapter provocative as well as intellectually stimulating to read.<sup>3</sup>

In contrast, Singer and Page write: “ethnographers who are attempting to study covert behaviors firsthand should never go undercover. That is, they should never present themselves as someone other than who they really are . . . the ethnographer should avoid any kind of identity deception.” These authors advise ethnographers to respond honestly, or they risk alienating the people with whom they are attempting to build rapport. Distinguishing concealment from deception, they view concealment as a “game” that is quite familiar and acceptable to people who are engaged in hiding their own activities. Recruitment strategies described in their chapter include months of “hanging out” in local bars, and, on other occasions, clandestinely watching people and their interactions on a public street from their rented study office window above. Meeting people that he had been observing for weeks, Page revealed his research interests to them when asked, skillfully avoiding any loss of trust. They suggest that protecting the researcher, the participants, and the research involves a wise and guarded process of revealing or withholding information.

Lindegaard, who at first perceived any withholding of information on her part as being dishonest with her participants, changed her views over the course of her research on violence in Cape Town. By the end of her study she concluded that what she thought was deception is part of the ethnographic process.

### *Community Consultants / Outreach Workers / Key Informants*

A variety of terms are used to describe the people who help ethnographers with insider information as recruiters or as gatekeepers to the population under study. Called community consultants, outreach workers, or key informants, these terms refer to people from the community who are involved in the research through a paid or unpaid relationship with the ethnographer. Singer and Page refer to individuals who fulfill this role as “outreach workers”; Valdez and his colleagues called them “community field workers” in one study and “key informants” in another.

Fessel and his coauthors discuss key informants who are hired for security reasons, as well as members of a local harm reduction center they call “spon-



sors” who vouch for the research team and provide introduction to potential research subjects. Some harm reduction workers became part of their research team. The authors warn, however, that relying too much on one source of consultants, such as harm reduction workers (currently quite popular in drug research), can present what is called a “social desirability” bias: “There is always the danger, if you’re accessing people through a harm reduction program, that people are going to repeat the harm reduction discourse . . . in a way that doesn’t reflect their lived experience or the lived experience of most users or at least the users who are not plugged into the harm reduction world.” The various roles discussed in their chapter represent community consultants at different levels of engagement.

Engaging community members in research is at the core of what is called Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) (Aguirre-Molina and Gorman, 1996), used by Honoria Guarino and Anastasia Teper in their study on young adults immigrants who use illegal drugs. Guarino and Teper discuss how key informants can be formally incorporated as part of the research team using a CBPR approach, in which members of the community hold well-defined roles in the study.

While the term *key informant* appears to be used across disciplines, it carries a negative connotation in many of the hidden communities where ethnographic research is conducted, particularly when these people are engaged in illegal activities. Police use “informants” as snitches to “rat” on their friends or family, a role despised by even law-abiding members of the community. The term *key informants* is therefore tainted by its link to the criminal justice system, and few people involved in hidden populations like to be called an informant.<sup>4</sup>

## ETHICS AND ETHNOGRAPHY

Ethics are important in all scientific disciplines, but there are different philosophies driving ethical decisions (Israel and Hays, 2009). While ethical research activities are linked to wider debates about ethics, and also about the role of the self and relationships in ethnography, addressing ethical issues in research generally starts with gaining approval from external ethics committees.

In the United States, research is typically reviewed by an IRB. Although IRBs should be primarily concerned with the protection of human subjects,

the power held by IRB members to mandate the details of this protection can expose the researcher and the subjects of research to unnecessary burdens and might shut down a research study entirely. For example, asking ethnographers to provide written consent for all participants is sometimes impossible when conducting ethnographic research with populations engaged in illegal activities. Although members of ethical committees are rarely privy to specifics of the ethical dilemmas and challenges ethnographers face in the field, burdensome demands may have to be met before ethnographers receive required IRB approval.<sup>5</sup> Ethnographers often question if members of these boards understand the nature of ethnographic research and whether ethnographic research should be exempt from ethical board approval (Gusterson, 2008).

Most ethnographers know that ethical perspectives from external sources can help to protect their study subjects in ways they might not have addressed sufficiently. Most professional societies and government agencies have established ethical guidelines that researchers must follow or be subject to serious consequences to their professional reputation, as well as to future research potential. Nevertheless, in recent years, the legitimacy of institutions to claim moral authority over research has been questioned, as perspectives on what is right or wrong ethically have differed depending on the kind of philosophical approach guiding authoritative decision-making (Israel and Hay, 2009).<sup>6</sup>

Conducting ethical research cannot be limited to written requirements and professional guidelines. Some ethnographers suggest that ethical concerns should be expanded for research with vulnerable populations. For example: “While in some types of social inquiry researcher responsibility may appear appropriately limited to the specific context of the risks or burdens produced by the research project, in ethnography the boundaries between research activities and other arenas of study participants’ lives are blurred. As a result, anthropologists have tended to assume a much broader “contract” and set of moral obligations than may be the case in other research disciplines” (Singer, Heurtes and Scott, 2000, 392). The contributing authors in this book address ethical concerns in different ways. While focusing on minimizing the harm to their research subjects, whether through oversight from IRBs and ethical committees, or by deep introspection of their own moral obligations, their chapters reveal contemplative care and attention to the consequences of their research. But their actions and strategies are not consistent across studies, reflecting the reality of field research.

Some authors describe how they addressed ethical guidelines during the development of the research plan, through the process of gaining IRB

approval, and in discussions on ethical concerns during research meetings. Others, however, addressed ethical difficulties more often while conducting research alone, or they reflected on ethical arguments after the research was completed and during the writing process, illustrating the difficulties of conducting ethnography.

Among U.S. contributors, some viewed the IRB process as a challenge to overcome. Their discussion of IRB issues provides insight on the regulatory requirements and reveal differences in institutional norms. In a few cases, IRB approval was not mentioned, which prompted us to question why not, highlighting the long-standing debate on what kind of research needs IRB approval.<sup>7</sup> Soltes was one of the authors who at first did not mention IRB in his chapter but later clarified that his research was a “case study” and therefore did not fall under the IRB oversight, which was consistent with IRB standards at his institution. Other types of research involving minimal potential harm to participants, such as oral histories, are exempt by some ethical boards but not by others.

Curtis Smith and Leon Anderson’s discussion of their challenges with the IRB is an example of the incongruity between research experiences of most IRB members and the reality of an ethnographer’s fieldwork. In Smith and Anderson’s study, requirements imposed by the IRB impacted the timing of Smith’s dissertation research, delaying it by some months. In their case, Anderson had built relationships with IRB members, making some of the restrictive problems with the IRB considerably more negotiable.

Ethical standards and procedures for research can vary widely across different countries. Sometimes reconciling the differences in ethical requirements can be challenging. Lindegaard is one of the international contributors who received approval from ethics boards in different countries. Based in the Netherlands but conducting her research in South Africa, she received approval for her research from the ethical commission of the University of the Western Cape *and* the University of Amsterdam, as well as from the South African Department of Education *and* Department of Correctional Services for her study on violent rape and murder. In contrast to Lindegaard, some of our U.S. contributors experienced more restrictions from their ethical boards for much less dangerous research, highlighting the differences between IRBs in the United States compared to other nations.

One of the challenges in the United States is the requirement to obtain a signed consent. Requesting participants to sign their names to a document after telling them their identity will not be revealed is a common problem for

ethnographers studying people engaged in stigmatized or illegal behaviors (Sanders and Copes, 2013). Sometimes, the justification to ask for a waiver for the signature is approved by the IRB, but this varies by institutions. IRB requirements resulted in some restrictions for Guarino and Teper, who write how they addressed IRB requirements for a signed informed consent by obtaining a “Certificate of Confidentiality” from the federal government to help ensure their participants that, despite the need to sign their name on the form, all their data was protected from court subpoena.<sup>8</sup>

The chapter by Campos-Manzo on her studies among some of the most vulnerable populations (e.g., incarcerated parents and their children) devotes detailed attention to the process of obtaining IRB approval for her research, which is typically a very difficult and time-consuming procedure. Campos-Manzo provides comprehensive guidance on how to address IRB requirements that often mean delays to starting or finishing research. When she was questioned on why she chose to study such vulnerable populations, her response drew attention to her personal beliefs on moral obligations as an ethnographer: “My answer is that every human being deserves dignity and respect. Part of that is understanding their lives holistically. To achieve that understanding, one must listen to their voices. Any challenge then becomes just a pebble on the path to creating platforms for marginalized voices to be heard.” Her chapter demonstrates how the IRB can be helpful in many ways, which is not always appreciated by researchers conducting ethnography.

Doing research ethically also means respecting what the subjects of a study are saying rather than ignore their claims when it clashes with commonly accepted scientific knowledge. The experiences and views of the subjects of ethnographic research might be more valid than knowledge generated by the scientific community working in labs and clinical settings. For example, Fessel et al. refer to an earlier study by Bourgois and Schonberg (2009), as they recall how the once popular public health recommendation that injectors should rinse their syringes with bleach was not being followed by the street injectors they met, who preferred to rinse with water instead. Integrating this “knowledge from below” with the medical establishment’s “knowledge from above” led to the discovery that using bleach could be harmful to some injectors. The authors discuss why “social plausibility” found through qualitative research must be added to the more established “biological plausibility” for better analysis and outcomes. Their chapter informs readers on how ethnographers can address a discrepancy between what they find on the field and what is “known” by the experts, which is not as uncommon as one might believe.<sup>9</sup>

Difficulties with IRB requirements seem less onerous when considering ethnography's rich discourse on reflexivity. The fine line between learning about one's self while learning about the culture and people being studied is a common theme in writing on ethnography. Some have used the metaphor of jazz to describe the ethnographer's role: "Ethnographers are engaged in a dual quest for self-identity and empathy that is improvised in ways that resemble the 'conversation' that occurs between jazz musicians when they are playing jazz" (Humphreys, Brown, and Hatch, 2003, 6). Ethnographic research conducted among hidden and often vulnerable populations compels the researcher to reflect on personal motives, values, beliefs, actions, and moral obligations.

Engaging with their subjects as cointerpreters of the data and often cocreators of the findings, ethnographers are not bound by the standard of objectivity found in positivist research philosophies. Unlike scientists using positivist approaches, ethnographers typically do not claim to be objective.<sup>10</sup> Their findings are not meant to be representative in the positivist sense that the findings of their small sample is representative of the whole population. Instead the findings represent the ethnographers' interpretation of the data they collected. It is revelatory, taking science in new directions. It is evocative, suggesting the limitations of what we think we know. Ethnography has a tradition of providing a genuine representation—arguably more so than scientific methods using statistical analyses (Marco and Larkin, 2000). In the ethnographer's role, objectivity is replaced with reflexivity:

The full meaning of reflexivity in ethnography refers to the ineluctable fact that the ethnographer is thoroughly implicated in the phenomena that he or she documents, that there can be no disengaged observation of a social scene that exists in a "state of nature" independent of the observer's presence, that interview accounts are coconstructed with informants, that ethnographic texts have their own conventions of representation. In other words, "the ethnography" is a product of the interaction between the ethnographer and a social world, and the ethnographer's interpretation of phenomena is always something that is crafted through an ethnographic imagination. (Atkinson, 2006, 402)

The contributors were asked to reveal the difficulties and unexpected challenges they faced with honesty and transparency. They responded beyond our expectations, illustrating the reflexive nature of their ethnographic work

through self-knowledge and introspection, questioning their own assumptions and preconceptions, and showing more concern for the effects of their research on their study populations than for their personal sacrifices and sorrows.

### *Impact on the Community*

Reflexivity through reflection, self-awareness, and engagement with the social world of the study population increases the authenticity of the findings (Malterud, 2001; Atkinson, 2006). One theme prominently discussed by our contributors was their consideration of how their work impacts the community they study. Valdez and his colleagues embedded reflexivity into their methods, with a specific goal: “Reflexive ethnography is immersion in the world that will eventually produce a participatory change in that world. . . . The critical feature of our methodology was a move from a methodology model based on a single ethnographer . . . to a team ethnography model that forced us to be reflexive in dealing with novel emerging problems.” Their experiences in a multiethnographer study provides practical knowledge on how to ensure reflexivity is a shared component of team research.

The contributors using photographs and videos of their participants often expressed concern about when visuals can meaningfully represent findings beyond text. Copes used photos to “to draw readers into the world of rural users of meth,” prompting him to reflect on “the emotional labor of working with people I grew to know and care about.” Price shares his profound personal deliberations on whether using photos or videos when exposing suffering is a kind of voyeurism, and that by “putting racialized violence on display, one risks desensitizing people to violence.” Will it lead to justifiable outrage? Does it relieve the suffering—or relive it? His questions do not end with answers, but they provoke reflection on the impact of visuals.

Bourgois, who uses videos of injecting practices in his research, described the ethnographer’s plight in his previous writing: “We cannot escape seeing, feeling, and empathizing with the people we study. It impels us to raise problematic questions and confronts us ethically and practically with the public stakes of our writing” (2011, 6). There is no right answer to when using visuals helps more than harms, and the ethnographer must make those difficult moral, ethical, and emotional decisions for each ethnographic study.<sup>11</sup>



## *Danger and Personal Tolls*

While all research impacts researchers, ethnography has the heightened ability to place researchers in the proverbial line of fire, exposing them to situations flooded with uncertainties and unknowns. Numerous types of personal costs can accompany ethnographic research. Personal costs extend beyond potential danger to life and economic costs, and include emotional and psychological tolls. These are referred to by various terms, including vicarious “post-traumatic stress” (Warden, 2012, 150), “secondary trauma” (Singer et al., 2001, 394), and “compassion stress” (Ragar, 2005, 426).

Ethnographers need not go into potentially dangerous situations blindly, but neither can they go in suspicious of everyone and everything. Bad experiences can happen, but they are the exception rather than the rule.<sup>12</sup> Ethnographic research is often a lonely endeavor, which increases its risks. Despite the abundant literature on how to avoid and protect against potential risks,<sup>13</sup> danger is “endemic in research on deviant behaviors” (Adler, 1993, 105).

Although many of our contributors described dangerous situations, few discussed the potential danger to themselves. Rarely is risk to personal safety discussed in detail.<sup>14</sup> The danger to which ethnographers can be subjected and how this is ameliorated, who has responsibility to and for whom, and how young or new ethnographers should be guided or supported in contemporary studies are areas that remain debated and generally part of the ethnographers discussion with their ethics boards.

Danger was ever present for Lindegaard when she traveled to Cape Town to study men who intentionally engaged in violent acts, and she discusses how she learned to address safety issues in her chapter. But instead of providing vivid details of the risks she was taking, she presents an introspective analysis of her long-held assumptions on the ethical and emotional aspects of ethnographic research. As a white European woman with no personal experience with violence, she was a complete outsider to her black South African male subjects who were incarcerated for violent acts. One warden advised her: “You have three things against you Marie: you are white, from far away, and you have a cute face, so watch out!” Lindegaard candidly revealed that she had no formal training in how to address the challenges she faced in South Africa, but she learned through the experience of doing ethnographic research. Her chapter discusses a number of textbook learned “ideals” that she brought to the field from the classroom, but she eventually had to