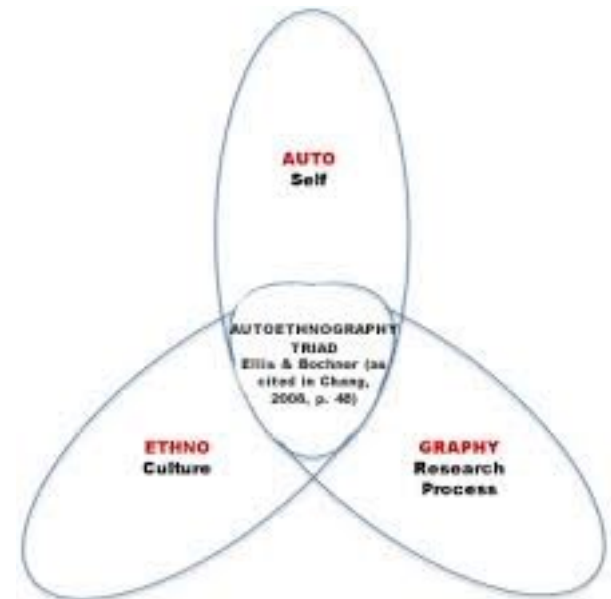


AutoEthnography (AE)

a basic guide for Management
Projects, Masters Theses and
Elective Credits

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Dr Anne Keizer-Remmers
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source:

<https://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2099&context=tqr>

Academy of International Hospitality Research &
StendenHMS, NHLStenden University of Applied Sciences

Background to this overview of AE

- Written in April 2020, during the middle of the 'lockdown' of The Netherlands as a result of the Covid19 virus, this presentation is an sketch of the background, meaning and elements of autoethnography. Its main audience is lecturing staff but students may also find this a useful starting point.
- It has tried to summarise the existing knowledge on the method and provides additional readings for those interested in using it for Management Projects, Masters Theses and Elective Credit options at StendenHMS
- Once things are 'back to normal' this information would be much better shared in classrooms with groupwork discussions and examples from lecturers, allowing questions to be asked and answered and guidelines to be captured in handbooks and Q&A sessions
- We welcome all feedback and suggestions for improving this presentation and see it as a first step, not the final word!



Autoethnography: What it is.

Seminal AE scholars Carolyn Ellis, Tony E. Adams and Arthur P. Bochner's thoughts on AE are nicely presented on *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research 121(1) 2011 Autoethnography: An overview*. They state that

“Autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyse (*graphy*) personal experiences (*auto*) in order to understand cultural experience (*ethno*) (Ellis, 2004; Holman Jones, 2005). ... A researcher uses tenets of *autobiography* and *ethnography* to *do* and *write* autoethnography. Thus, as a method, autoethnography is both process and product” (p. 1)

Retrieved from:

<http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1589/3095>



Autoethnography: What it is.

According to the American sociologist Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber (2017, p. 371),

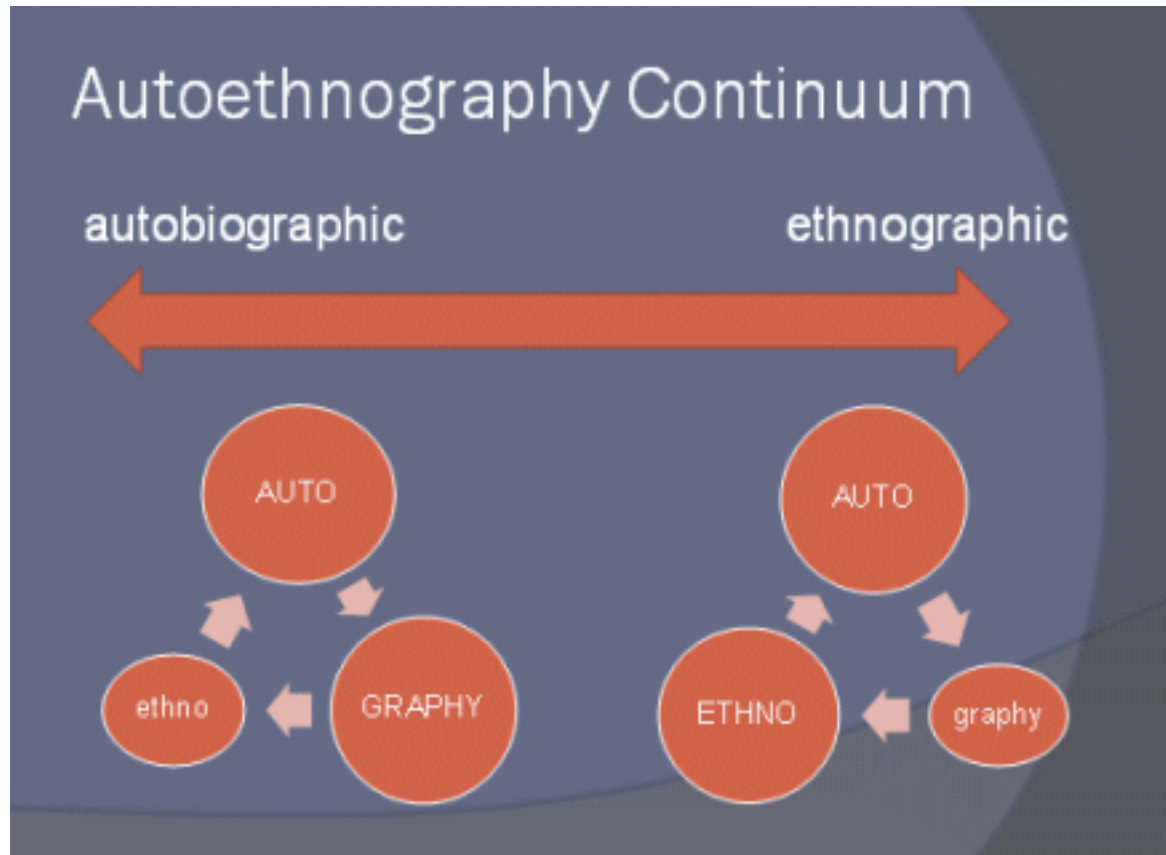
“this method allows you to use your own experiences, thoughts, feelings, and emotions as data to help you understand the social world. This kind of research can be empowering for the researcher subject and can raise one’s self consciousness and reflexivity. ... Whereas autoethnography is evocative in that it provides a way to get at the emotions, you can also analyse autoethnographic data with the goal of understanding those wider societal factors that are reflected in your evocative autoethnographic data. C. Wright Mills once noted that “personal troubles” are often symptomatic of “public issues”.

Nagy Hesse-Biber, S. (2017). *The practice of qualitative research. Engaging students in the research process.* (3rd Ed.) Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Inc.

[see quote C. Wright Mills in notes to this slide]



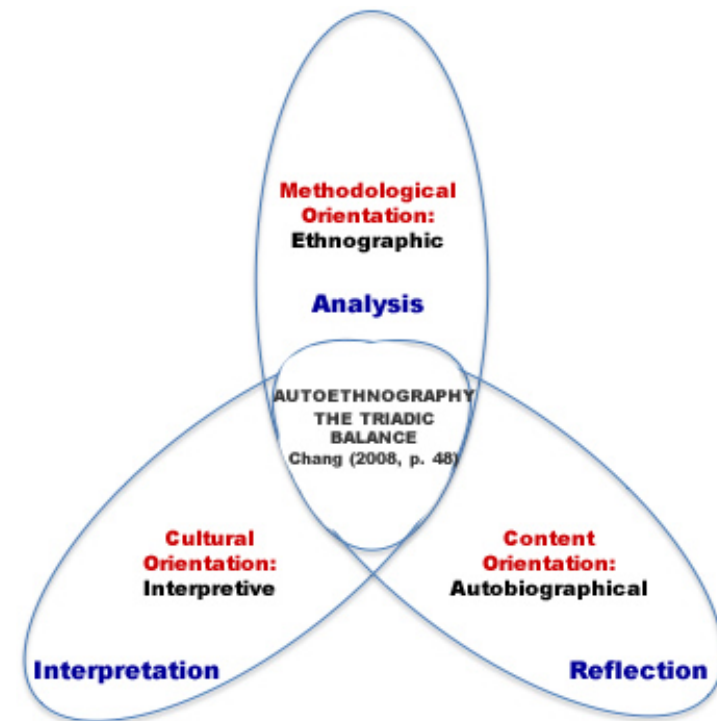
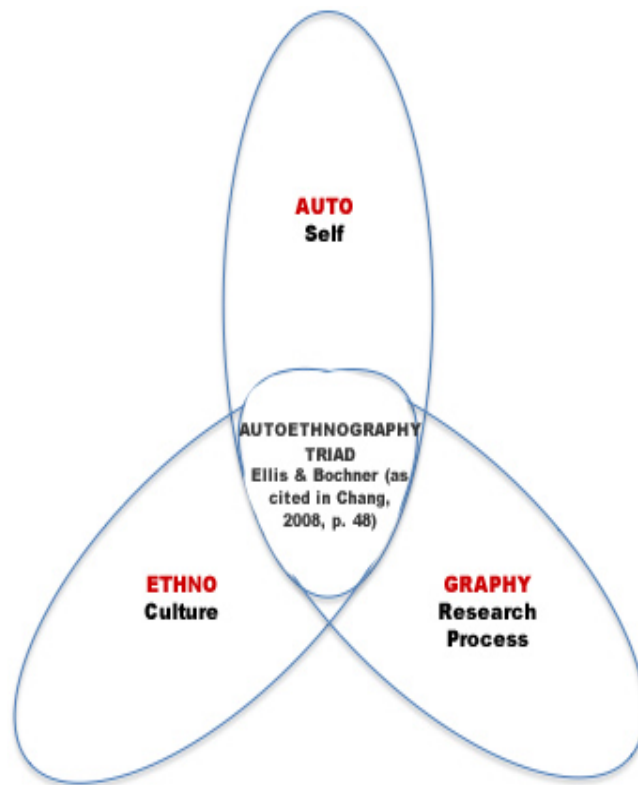
Autoethnography in Continuum



Source: Autoethnography continuum, adapted from Ellis and Bochner (2000) in Ngunjiri, Hernandez, & Chang, 2010
<http://jrp.icaap.org/index.php/jrp/article/view/241/210>



3 main components in AE



Schnyder, M. M (2015). Leaning into Autoethnography: A Review of Heewon Chang's *Autoethnography As Method*. *The Qualitative Report*, 20(2), 93-96.



Rationale for application

AE is used to give embedded personal accounts to

- *“speak against or provide alternatives to, dominant, taken for granted, and harmful cultural scripts, stories and stereotypes”*
- *“articulate insider knowledge of cultural experience”*;
- narrate *“moments of every day experience that cannot be captured through more traditional research methods”*;
- *“create texts that are accessible to larger audiences, primarily audiences outside of academic settings”* (Adams, Ellis, Holman Jones, 2017, p. 4)

Adams, T. E., Ellis, C., & Holman Jones, S. (2017) Autoethnography. In J. Matthes, C.S. Davis & R. F. Potter (Ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods* (n.p.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons Inc. Retrieved from <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/9781118901731.iecrm0011>

Doing (*Process*)

source: Adam, Ellos, & Holam Jones, 2017)

Doing AE includes

1. identification & exploration of an “epiphany” - an event that has (in hindsight) great transformational impact on one’s life;
2. exploration of the event within the cultural context it occurred while investigating others / artefacts to compare and contrast experiences, to discern patterns through qualitative methods
3. application of theoretical & methodological tools as well as research literature

Writing (*Product*)

source: Adam, Ellos, & Holman Jones, 2017)

Writing AE includes

1. creating an “aesthetic and evocative [text that] engage[s] readers and use[s] conventions of storytelling”
2. **“showing”** => bringing a *being there perspective* via rich descriptions and
“telling about” => to create a distance and creating space for reader reflection.

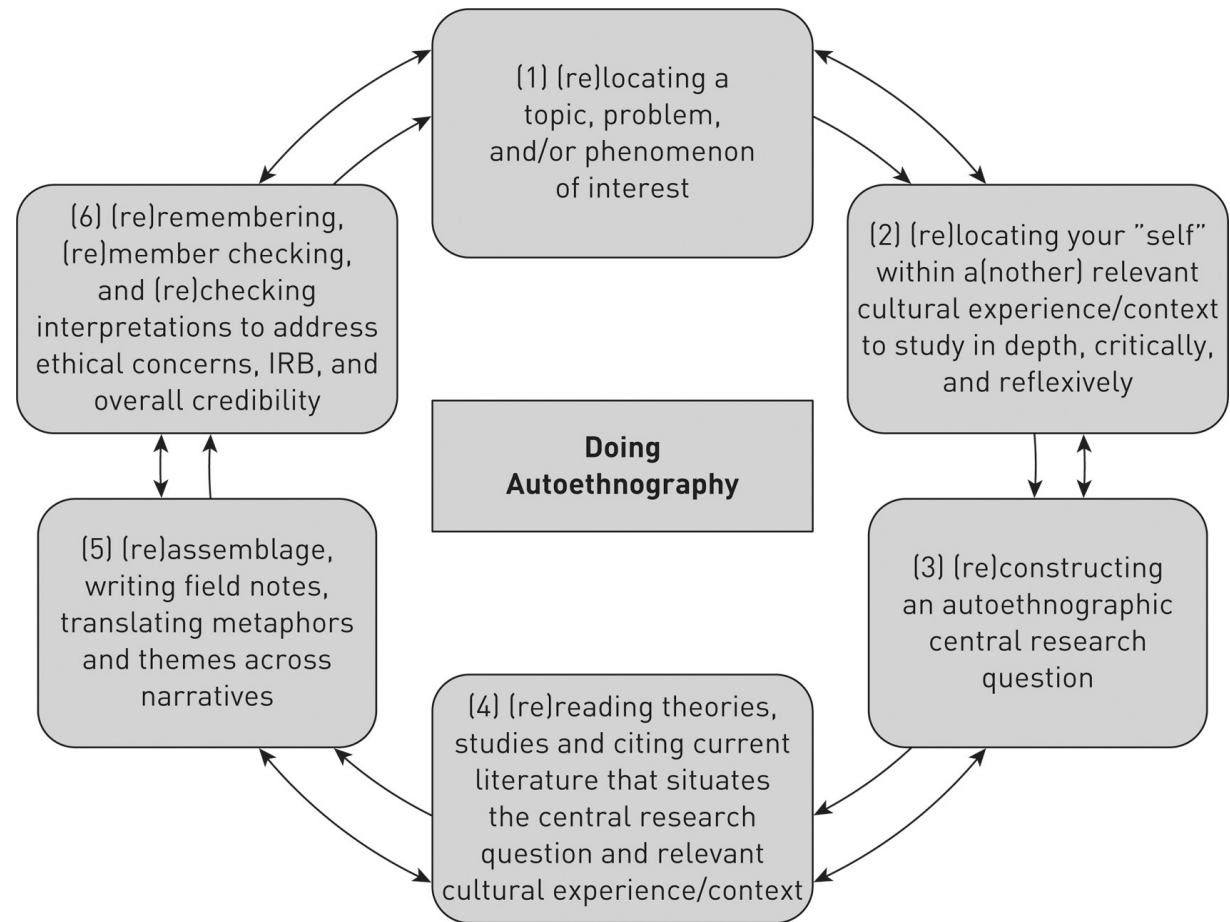
2 comments on WRITING in AE

“One can write in aesthetically compelling ways without citing fiction or being educated as a literary or performance scholar. The questions most important to autoethnographers are: who reads our work, how are they affected by it, and how does it keep a conversation going?” (Ellis, Adam & Bochner, 2010, n.p.)

“Autoethnographic forms feature concrete action, emotion, embodiment, self-consciousness, and introspection portrayed in dialogue, scenes, characterization, and plot. Thus, autoethnography claims the conventions of literary writing” (Ellis cited in Nagy Hesse Biber, 2017, p. 371)



DOING & WRITING: an iterative process



Hughes, S. A., & Pennington, J. L. (2017). *Autoethnography. Process, products, and possibility for critical social research*. Thousand Oaks, CA : Sage Publications, Inc.

Applicable Quality criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research (Tracy, 2010)

AE writing presents literary forms written for academic scientific audience and needs to follow academic criteria for goodness of research.

- Worthy topic
- Rich rigor
- Sincerity
- Credibility
- Resonance
- Significant contribution
- Ethical
- Meaningful coherence

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/230557825_Qualitative_Quality_Eight_Big_Tent_Criteria_for_Excellent_Qualitative_Research/link/00b4953a6e85ab1c36000000/download

Who is using Autoethnography?

Jackie Goode used autoethnography “to examine an instance of ‘eating out’ alone as constitutive of gendered nature of sociality in public spaces. It supplements emerging analysis of lone female dining in a context of ‘single’ women being increasingly significant category of offering further differentiation in terms of age and venue type.

Goode, J. (2018) Being one’s own honoured guest: eating alone as gendered sociality in public spaces. *Sociological Research Online* 23(1), pp. 100-113.

John Tribe used the method as a “focused critical professional reflection” using his own 10 years of professional experiences as among others “Editor-in-Chief” and “senior tourism academic” to investigate the quality of tourism research aiming at “unpacking of both the tacit and explicit factors involved in creating, curating and legitimizing knowledge so that those involved may be better advised and prepared.”

Tribe, J. (2018). Creating and curating tourism knowledge. *Annals of Tourism Research* 73, pp. 14 - 25

Who is using Autoethnography?

The motivation to understand the experiences of a Hindu religious lacto-vegetarian in a predominantly meat-eating society prompted me to undertake this study. For this purpose, I became a vegetarian for a month and noted down my experiences in an auto-ethnographical study. I discovered how my culture, my reflexivity and my past life experiences influence who I am and how I choose my food. The loneliness and fears that I faced during the study will also be discussed. The second reason for this research was to understand and experience the challenges of autoethnography as a research methodology and to try to legitimise it as a credible genre of scholarly work.

Mayukh, D. (2017) My vegetarian experience: an autoethnographic approach. *Asia Pacific Journal of Innovation in Hospitality and Tourism*, 6(1), pp 15 - 32

Who is using Autoethnography?

Chris & Rungpaka Amy Hackley explain in the abstract to their paper,

“Marketing and consumer research is often associated with the methods of natural science applied to experimental and survey data, but there are also strong traditions of interpretive and qualitative work that draw on disciplines such as qualitative sociology, ethnography and anthropology. This paper outlines one such approach, autoethnography, in order to consider its wider adoption in marketing and consumer research. The paper refers to multidisciplinary sources along with autoethnographic studies published in American and European marketing and consumer research journals. It concludes by suggesting that a stronger understanding of autoethnographic research principles could broaden the scope, reach and relevance of marketing and consumer research. “

Hackley, C., & Hackley, R. A. (2016). Autoethnography and subjective experience in marketing and consumer research. *Rimar Maringa* 6(1), pp. 3 -10.

Possible themes/ areas for Stenden Hotel Management School Research with AE

- Millennial work force & Covid19;
- Changing career perspectives of hotel school students due to Covid19;
- Sexual harrassment in employee - guest interaction;
- Emotional labour among hospitality industry employees;
- Expressive labour and phenomenon of hospitality (Poulston, 2015)

AE and research ethics (Pat Sikes I)

The following guidelines (adapted from Tolich, 2010; Sikes, 2010 and 2013) are offered as prompts when considering the ethical implications of autoethnographic research and writing:

- protect the people whose lives are the focus and substance of the research;
- respectfully depict those people;
- be alert to the potential misuse of interpretational and authorial power;
- be aware of tricky and slippery questions and issues around truth/s (or 'truth/s') (cf Medford, 2006 p. 853);
- avoid what Sabi Redwood (2008) and John Bergin and Robert Westwood (2003), call 'violent' textual practices which shape and tame the lives that we use as 'data' in order to present and privilege a version that serves our purposes;
- respect participants' autonomy and the voluntary nature of participation and document the informed consent processes that are foundational to qualitative inquiry (Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, 2007);
- practice 'process consent' checking at each stage to make sure participants still want to be part of the project (Ellis, 2007);
- recognise the conflict of interest or coercive influence when seeking informed consent after writing the manuscript (Jago, 2002; Rambo, 2007);

AE and research ethics (Pat Sikes II)

- consult with others, such as your institutional ethics committee (Chang, 2008; Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, 2007);
- do not publish anything you would not show the persons mentioned in the text (Medford, 2006);
- beware of internal confidentiality: the relational risk is not that the researcher will expose confidences to outsiders, but that confidences will be exposed to other participants or members of their family, friendship or acquaintanceship networks (Tolich, 2004);
- treat any autoethnography as a permanent 'inked tattoo' and attempt to anticipate your own, and others', future vulnerabilities;
- audio-visual anticipatory research ethics claims that no photograph is worth harming others. In a similar way, no story should harm others, and if harm is unavoidable, take steps to minimize that harm;
- if you are unable to minimize risk to self or others, the default position should be that you should use a *nom de plume* (Morse, 2002);
- assume that all people mentioned in the text will read it one day (see Ellis, 1995).

Source: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.586562!/file/SREGP-Autoethnography-2015.pdf

Further reading

- Adams, T. E., Jones, S. H., & Ellis, C. (2015). *Autoethnography: Understanding qualitative research*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Chang, H. (2008). *Autoethnography as method*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, Inc.
- Denzin, N. K. (2014). *Interpretive autoethnography* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (2017) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (5th Ed.). Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Ellis, C. (2004). *The ethnographic I: A methodological novel about autoethnography*. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.
- Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. P. (1996). *Composing ethnography*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Also see References in Adams, Ellis & Holman Stacy

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/9781118901731.iecrm00>

Online resources through the NHLStenden library

Students can 'borrow' a maximum of 6 books this VIA STUDY STORE - it will allow them to continue their studies during the lockdown. Students need to set up an account first, after which they will be able to select their 6 titles (until 1 May). The link to the page is: <https://www.studystore.nl/c/gratis-toegang-ebooks-tot-1-mei>

Ebsco Ebooks also has the following title which has a chapter on (Auto)Ethnography in The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Business and Management Research Methods:

<http://search-1ebSCOhost-1com-1zu0iwqsc0071.access.nhlstenden.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1679432&site=ehost-live&scope=site&authtype=ip,shib&custid=s1242078>

Thank you for your time and attention

In this ppt presentation we have tried to give you a flavour of a research method you may not have come across before.

1. We hope it has been helpful and informative
2. Feel free to contact us if you would like to use this method in your research – we are not experts but we should be able to help you along the way
3. Do please look for, download and read the references on the previous slide – they will be a valuable help to you on your research journey
4. Why not look for our other resources on ethnography, focus groups, personal interviews and participant observation – there are MANY ways to do research!