

Ana Ashtalkovska Gajtanoska (Macedonia)
Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology,
“Ss. Cyril and Methodius” University of Skopje
e-mail: ashtalkovska@gmail.com

A SHORT NOTE FOR THE *ULTIMATE EVIDENCE* IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN MACEDONIAN CONTEXT

Abstract: Throughout different examples regarding the effects of several practices or techniques for documenting the research problem (field notes and recording) certain positivistic assumptions are being reexamined about what can be referred as *evidence* in Macedonian qualitative research. Actually, the text confronts the feather-bedding of one kind of *evidence* over against other, respectively it stresses the importance of the researcher's experience as *evidence* of validity in whatever practice of *documenting*.

Key words: evidence, qualitative research, recording, field notes, experience.

Introduction

The motive for this note about the ultimate evidence in social and humanistic qualitative researches in Macedonian context were some student's dilemmas at the Institute of ethnology and anthropology in Skopje during their study. For example, when we talk about field notes and the opportunity to write entire diploma work based on these notes, students are confused because they think/ assume that there is no *evidence* for field work. Field notes for their experience on which is based the final text are rather “weak evidence” since in that case “how (professors) will others know whether we actually finished the field research or if we simply invented the data?” For others to know and finally for them to be able to check, there needs to exist more firm/tangible *evidence* for their experiences, for example transcripts, audio recordings, or even better video materials. But sometimes even the validity of that kind of “tangible evidence” is being played out. For example, one student dared to record an interview with himself but with a mutated voice that was supposed to represent the *other* or the *informant* that answers his questions. Of course this action is highly irresponsible and has something to do with his capacities, because nowadays the students are seriously encouraged to talk about their own experiences. On this occasion I put aside the ethical problems of ethnology and anthropology in Macedonian context and of course I discarded the claims about the mentality that educate people to chose shortcut solutions even when those are utterly unethical and immoral. Apart from these examples, everyone who deals with these disciplines probably has been faced with similar dilemmas, besides the fact that they rarely (or never) have been rationalized in this way. That kind of venture is pretty complicated for several reasons, and in the end the texts regarding the (un)scientific basis of one's own discipline

while positivistic guidance serve as a valid measure for comparison, risk to be identified as hypochondriac¹.

Against positivism...

To begin I would like to indicate some deliberations specific for social and humanistic researches regarding their scientific context. An older and more traditionalistic definition about the term method says, “the term referencing the actions for collecting data is a regular topic of a discussion, some call those actions ‘methods’, others call them ‘techniques’ but no matter which term is being used the main goal of this action is to collect objective or complete, verifiable, systematic and precise empirical data for the occurrence that is subject to research. Collecting empirical data goes through standard systematic procedure that is connected with the previous phases and methods of the research” (Наковски 2005: 1). All the elements that according to this definition are inevitable for a scientific research, such as objectivity, verifiability, exactness of the empirical data etc. are questionable. The field research instead of being “a standard systematic procedure” is in fact very personal, unique and unrepeatable experience, and not only in a poetic sense, but it is so on a very practical level. A concrete, unique researcher develops such relations with a unique and concrete interlocutor in field research. “...The things said are responses to these words of this particular researcher” (DeVault 2004: 232). With the researcher’s position on the field many questions are being imposed that oblige us to relax from the objectivity concept because “People do not act like rocks, light, atoms or anything else in the physical and natural world. A science of rocks doesn’t work for people” (De Munck 2008: vi²).

Interactive nature of research represents norm in social and humanistic researches. It is rather problematic if we stick to the idea that in the research process we are objectively approaching and analyzing what we are interested in – as it really is, as it exists in reality (see Guba, Lincoln 2004: 20, 21). The scientific objectivity promoted and supported by the positivistic paradigms is dealing with studying objects, and not subjects of research, while the researcher is objective and according to that is privileged as someone who knows. Subjectivity of the researcher as well as of the researched subjects is ignored and treated as unwanted, as something that should be minimized and if it is possible, to be destroyed. Subjectivity has no place in the scientific researches that are value free, objective, veritable, apolitical, that only exist only to create knowledge (see Sprague, Zimmerman 2004: 41, 43).

The claim that ethnological and anthropological research have an empirical base is consensual. The empirical world is the one of senses that is “the world you can see, hear, smell, touch, and (less frequently considered in the social sciences) taste” (Esterberg 2002: 5). General definitions of empirical world get a certain extension of the concept that is supposed to embrace other contents of sensory stimuli. For example, the em-

¹ I would like to thank the two reviewers for the extremely useful remarks and corrections regarding this text.

² The published version of De Munck’s work was not available to me, so I used the manuscript and the page numbers refer to the manuscript as well.

irical epistemological base of ethnology and anthropology and of their created knowledge can be methodologically legitimated by the following aspects: “entrance in the researched community, empathy, closeness, catching the experience of the researched subjects and researcher’s own experience” (Čapo Žmegač, Gulin Zrnčić, Šantek 2006: 24). When it comes to the sensory world and the things acknowledged by it, the assumption imposed says that we are dealing with reality (for example when we can see the thing that is, we are not imagining it, then it really exists in the world regardless of us) or as Hastrup says, anthropology refers to the real world (Hastrup 2004: 458) though the concepts such as reality, truth, objectivity and many others that have positivistic undertone are seriously reconsidered and highly problematized by the postmodern paradigms. Because of that, when Esterberg says the same, she puts the term real world under quotes, “you need to consider whether the research questions you propose can be answered with reference to the ‘real’ world” (Esterberg 2002: 30).

The research especially in this time that Hastrup calls postpositivistic period, doesn’t allow treating the evidence as external, or as something out of context in certain situation (Hastrup 2004: 455). Feyerabend says that the worship of *facts* is typical for almost entire empiricism (Фейерабенд 2000: 46). Contrary to those theses are the above mentioned arguments, as well as the simplest explanation about the qualitative research. According to its name, the qualitative research implies emphasis on the quality and meanings that cannot be counted or put in quantitative frames. Because of that qualitative research highlight the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relation between researcher and what has been researched, as well as situational limitations of the research. These researches are not value free but contrary, are value leaden (see Denzin, Lincoln 2003: 13).

All those aspect that are analyzed during the last years (the intimacy of the field work, positioning, emotional aspects of the research process etc.) makes the idea about the anthropological knowledge based on evidence, very problematic. Hastrup explains this through several important points. Although the term evidence has strong positivistic undertone, in anthropology the evidence as something that convinces and shows that the researcher is right implies completely different concept than the positivistic one. The epistemology of these disciplines excludes the evidence as an independent and external validation measure. The anthropological form of knowledge means generalizing based on the researcher’s own field work experience, and not according to some abstract ideas that are considered as evidence, whereupon the evidence in these disciplines is connected with the experience. The experience whatsoever cannot be considered as evidence in a positivistic manner because it doesn’t belong to someone who stands outside the situation for which the experience stands as evidence. It has to be emphasized that this aspect of field research does not make it invalid in relation to gaining certain knowledge because it has already been pointed out that it is not supported by evidence in the positivistic manner and validity according to the author is in the fact that anthropologists are in touch with the reality, and “not standing outside it looking for evidence”. The opposition towards evidence in a positivistic sense which makes impossible measurement of truthfulness of the interpretation had challenged the radical postmodernism to reject every idea of truth positioning all the truths and all the stories in equal position (Hastrup 2004: 468). Similar is the point of Feyerabend when he says that facts are not the only aspects that compose the science (science in general terms) because it is also consisted of “ideas, interpretations of

facts, problems composed of contrasting interpretations, mistakes etc". This leads to the conclusion that "clear facts" are in fact an illusion because all facts "are seen in certain way and that is why they are essentially mediated by ideas" (Ферабенд 2000: 14, 15).

In the end, according to the short abovementioned pointers, "We can recognize that social inquiry is an uncertain business, in the sense that we can never be entirely sure about the validity of any knowledge claims, without adopting a complete scepticism which is, in any case, self-refuting – to say that we can know nothing is itself to make a knowledge claim" (Hamersly, Atkinson 2009: 233).

Practical or technical illustrations

What is the atmosphere in Macedonian ethnology in context of above mentioned rethinking about researcher's objectivity or subjectivity, his standpoint/positioning, the science's tasks, empirical reality, evidence in ethnology and anthropology etc.?

Besides philosophical examinations regarding these disciplines, more banal questions about practicing these disciplines are involved also, especially in relations to field work. By provisionally identifying them as *banal* I just want to point that skepticism is even more implicated when the inspection is concerning the technical aspects of research, especially when it leads to some conclusions about researcher's *proper* behavior. However, for illustration purposes here I discuss some personal but also shared examples about some practices or techniques of field work in Macedonia.

Traditionally thoroughness and precision are considered as norms in our disciplinary community. Not just in the older ethnography of Macedonia, but in a contemporary one also, the practice of detail identification of interlocutors in fieldwork is very typical. That is the result of the treatment of interlocutor's data as facts, evidence that should be objectively and scientifically processed, or as "certain bet of positivistic objectivity and verifiability of the research results" (for similar principles in Croatian ethnography see Čapo Žmegač, Gulin Zrnić, Šantek 2006: 41). I considered this praxis as an obligation during my first field researches, as that gives certain weight and credibility to the information gained from the interlocutors. I collected empirical data and their origin must be revealed in order to be empirical because otherwise it may not be treated as such even when it comes to extremely private data. The best option is if the data is recorded on a voice recorder because this additionally provides the materials "verifiability". In this context at least for me it wasn't about estimation whether my interlocutors are laying or not, it was more important to *log* them as a confirmation that I am not lying and making up things (similar to the student's dilemmas at the beginning of the article). Although it rarely happens asking for this kind of personal data to create serious communication problems (it certainly depends on many other elements) still pressing the record button along with this kind of questions surely doesn't contribute much for relaxed conversation. The fact that recording is considered to be extremely important can be confirmed by many of my colleagues. Vesna Petreska asks the similar question for recording as a technique that provides more evidence and at the same time recording may distract intimacy and sincerity in field work, "when we talk, they say 'turn it off and I'll tell you'. How can one do a scientific interpretation in such case? Does it mean that I shouldn't take in to consideration additional statements that are not recorded to avoid 'private explanations', or should I ignore the sit-

uations where the intolerance between relatives is obvious and by doing so, contributing to a creation of an idyllic image typical for the ethnological researches of the past that has never existed in reality?” (Петреќка 2009: 147). According to that, with the persistence to record intimate conversations with the interlocutors there is a risk that only one side will be investigated, the one that reflects the ideal model of thinking and acting, while the real model will stay hidden. (For the treatment of interlocutors in Macedonian ethnology and the positivistic directions in this context see АШТЛКОВСКА Гајтаноска 2013).

When it comes to researcher’s physical presentation, the use of technical aids in field work is being discussed also. Especially when it comes to the first contact between the researcher and potential interlocutors, if one is loaded with cameras, voice recorders, notebooks, pencils, this kind of presentation can impose nonstandard, unusual situation of interrogation and recording and that is exactly the kind of impression that the researcher is trying to avoid. The recorder of any kind may frighten the interlocutors that are sharing intimate moments of their lives. Associations of public abuse of recorded files are very common. Recording and technical equipment for that purpose can become an obstacle because the interlocutors are inhibited according to the assumptions about some kind of formality of an informal conversation, so the answers will be limited in accordance with their idea about what is a decent conversation. The interlocutors’ fears are about data misuse for other purposes than private especially when they share intimate aspects of their own or others’ lives or when the protagonists’ names are mentioned in the intimate stories they tell. Recording can interfere in the free conversation when it is about the shocking events from the interlocutors surroundings, about things that are not suppose to be discussed, or to be directly opened as a topic of discussion. Recording imposes an official atmosphere that highlights the interlocutors’ self-control when they are intending to say some shameful or objectionable word. It is so, especially when they say explicit, impolite words that are usually inappropriate for an old lady. That is why interlocutors in such situations do not forget to warn us about their expectations that the use of this material should be strictly limited, because any other situation different than the promised one would be unfair. Stamena for example acted contrary to the above mentioned “rule” because an old lady, mainly because of her age can afford to speak about taboo themes that otherwise can be discussed in a very narrow and closed circle. Audio recording can be especially scary if the old ladies mix it with the recording that can show their “faces” on TV. Although every situation that has been recorded can be problematic from an ethical perspective especially when promises for anonymity and confidentiality are not respected, still there are certain situations when recording is particularly problematic in an ethical sense, for example when every one of the interlocutors has different requirements when it comes to noting/documenting the communication process. Recording can be used by the interlocutors for their “special” goals. At the house of an extended family recording induced big quarrels between one very untypical mother-in-law and her three daughters-in-law because the mother-in-law decided to make a “public” critique of their flaws. She checked several times if her sharp critiques for her daughters-in-law and their families have been recorded or not. Because of this tricky situation the daughters-in-law were afraid of recording the conversation so the one whose turn is for critiquing asks to turn off the recorder. Edvina is the first one, “Turn it off Ana. You say he asked five, but he didn’t!”, then warns Sena-

da, “Our talks are being recorded”, and at the end Arijana, “she is coming, turn it off”³. The mother-in-law does not have a problem with recording but on the contrary she confidently continues to attack with an intention that her attacks to be recorded. On the other side, the daughters-in-law in a different situation were trying to neutralize the fear of recording when two guests came to their house, justifying it simply as the need of some words. When someone’s positive aspect are being highlighted, recording is not considered as a threat. For example when two guests who were frightened about recording the fights, when they decided to praise the daughters-in-law they decided that this positive conversation is worth being recorded. The official atmosphere that sometimes is imposed by recording may interfere in using the dialect freely or the free use of folk terminology because, interlocutors need to sound literary, comprehensible and to control their expression in that manner. The notion that young researchers don’t understand the traditional terminology is also common, so it needs to be adjusted to their capacities. Some interlocutors even when taboo-themes are involved do not consider recording as a threat but instead as a nice way to catch someone’s voice “A.A: Come on. I will let you listen to your voice later”⁴. For many of my interlocutors who find the techniques we use at field work as very interesting and completely unknown tools that can record a voice and have the capacity to catch the moment, listening to their voice can be a very exciting experience. In these situations recording is not a daunting technique, but can serve as a way to stimulate the conversation because for someone to be documented in this way means respect towards the person of interlocutor that will stay memorized and spoke about maybe after one’s death. So the strategy for encouraging an honored interlocutor in a manner “A.A: Say it so we can remember it” – means conserving their words, thoughts, expressions that can be protected from oblivion with our help. Others do not have a problem with this type of documenting the conversation because they simply want to do so. Marija was very much engaged with telling her stories with special attention to continuity for the sake of the recording. Recording of stories told “in order” of things (continuity) means that interlocutors should not be interrupted by others. So Marija pays attention on changing tapes which means that she should stop talking, to hold on her thought and continue the story when a record button is pressed, so her storytelling to be as she intended: Ma: “I will tell you later. Wait, you need to put in another tape”⁵. In that way recording can even encourage the interlocutors to tell more incredible stories. S.T. “If you haven’t recorded this, let’s do it here”⁶. Some of them are paying a great attention of what has been recorded and what not and their records are highly precise. At the end, when it comes to researcher’s standpoint, when a harmless “girl” is the one recording, to which this will be of great help in school, and even if recorded material is intended for her to have fun with the friends, it is not a big deal.

The above mentioned examples in context of recording can illustrate how hard or how impossible it is to develop one line of effects in very particular circumstances of field research. That is why those rethinking of things can easily be identified as *banal* especial-

³ AIEA, DEM_591, E, Sn, A, women over 30 years old, recorded on 13.09.2006.

⁴ AIEA, DEM_48, recorded on 27.05.1999

⁵ AIEA, DEM_598, Ma, woman 75, recorded on 17.09.2006.

⁶ AIEA, DEM_121, S.T., woman born 1929, recorded on 11.05.2000.

ly if put in another positivistic ranking. There are so many variants and finally this condition is worth to be considered as a special quality by qualitative researchers. Additionally, drawing of certain *rules* in this context is extremely problematic because all fieldwork situations are dependable on context and on standpoints of the interlocutors and researchers.

In Macedonian research practice the voice recorder is considered to be main/basic tool for the researcher. This education of researchers suggests to a positivistic image for the research itself or as Esterberg says, the possibility to record everything makes the researchers (especially students) more secure that they are getting the complete and objective image of what happened. But it is important to point out that concentration of this kind of documenting the events also risks to miss a great part of what people are doing or saying because there is no way to record everything that is happening (Esterberg 2002: 62). The need to document field work situations in this way (by recording) moreover ensures security because of the verifiability of data in a sense that we can return to them over and over again as much as we need and according to that to create different impressions for what we hear or see in the document. But the security about the verifiability of the recorded materials has its positivistic dimension because it assumes that there is a document which testifies to what has happened and that is not so dependable on the researcher. While recording really offers important possibilities apart from positivistic interpretations, notes in written form does not have the same “precision” in documenting and the field notes are more closed interpretations of the researcher. The resistance towards the field notes as relevant and maybe the only way of documenting in the research process can be seen from the following quote, “How can one do a scientific interpretation in such case? Does it mean that I shouldn’t take in to consideration additional statements that are not recorded to avoid ‘private explanations?’ (Петрепка 2009: 147). Therefore ‘the private recording’ that actually is a researcher’s unrecorded experience at field work is still a problem in our environment and is treated as less credible than the direct documenting of data that come out form the interlocutors’ mouths by recording their voice and appearance, “but I personally think that we should not ‘avoid’ immediate recordings that are happening every day and in any occasion and to tremble whether the question about the privacy of our explanations will come out” (Петрепка 2009: 147). According to that it is important to point that the “private recoding” is of course the basic of every field research even when the researcher thinks that is approaching objectively to it.

Unlike this, the western academy treats the field notes as a suitable and in certain circumstances as strongly promoted way of documenting the researcher’s field experiences⁷. For example, Barret believes that recording is eligible when several interviews are involved or when a researcher needs to analyze some average portion of data or in situations when precise transcripts of speech patterns are necessary as for example discourse analysis. In large projects that include large number of interviews, recording is superfluous since that amount of recorded material should be transcribed and when people are paid to do the job, on a list of expenses goes those for transcribing. Additionally, very of-

⁷ For documenting and evidence possibilities of field notes, when and where should be written, see Esterberg 2002: 73, 74; for recording against the field notes, and for notes on recorded interviews see Esterberg 2002: 106, 107; for memorizing techniques of what should be written after the interviewing see Barret 1997: 134; for writing the journal of research method used see Barret 1997: 113, 114; Emerson, Fretz, Shaw 2001: 355; Хамерсли, Аткинсон 2009: 143, 147, 148.

ten there are no conditions to transcribe the interviews immediately, and sometimes they are not transcribed at all, and this imposes a danger for the researcher to forget the context in which the interviewing took place. “My dislike of the tape recorder may be purely idiosyncratic, and not something that should be passed on to students. Yet in my judgment the preferred procedure is to write elaborate notes, including interpretations, as one does research” (Barret 1997: 134).

The writing of field notes is not a common praxis in our disciplines in Macedonian context, although today students are not just encouraged to practice writing field notes but with certain professors, this is an obligatory assignment. However, for me recording had the advantage before writing field notes. But working as an assistant researcher, the head researcher rejected the practice of recording contrary to my idea of the importance to record everything that interlocutors are saying. That is how writing field notes and very detailed ones became my routine during the research. We were usually writing the notes at the end of the “working day”, which means in the evening hours and sometimes this process was lasting as long as the observation did. Even after the ending of this project that included very detailed field notes, so a certain practice in this can be assumed, in the next project again I had neglected this important segment of field work. The reduction of ambiguity and inspiration for writing field notes can be traced in the field work journal according to the number of pages for each day at field work. The first few days were covered with several pages of field notes, and as time was passing, page numbers were decreasing, so at the end the field note contains only the following:

Place of the research: village Brezovo

Region: Drimkol

Date of the research: 16.09.2006

Researcher: Ana Ashtalkovska

Recorded material: tapes with number 20 and 21

At grandmother Filka and Menka.

Together with the elegant conclusion that everything has been recorded and that it is definitely enough.

Although there is a difference between field researchers when it comes to the quality of conducting their field work, still the reliance on the raw field data has been considered as mandatory strategy in their books, articles, dissertations. On the account of this habit, theoretical, methodological and analytic potential is weak, because of the popular attitude that field research and field data should be the core of the text but in a literal sense, which means that the texts contain more description than analysis. These writing habits can be treated as positivistic manifestations of the importance of the concrete, documented data, instead of thoughts and experiences of the text author which contain more subjective core that is not verifiable at field work.

Validity issues...

Although the experience dimension of the research is of course very much relevant in order for one to be able to write about it, still it is subjected through strong epistemological and methodological reexaminations, what is experience, whose experience we represent, for whom we are writing our texts. Do words directly and exactly reflect the

experience?... As well as countless other questions. This serious rethinking that burdens the anthropologists are identified as “epistemological hypochondria” by Geertz as part of the ethnographic writing crisis which means losing the trust on many levels (Gerc 2010: 84, 85). Raw experience can not be fully portrayed as it is in the text that represents it. No matter how hard we try to keep the liveliness of the experience in our texts, the writing by itself limits the strength and liveliness of experiences. For example while writing “the nonverbal and paralinguistic canals are not available”. As Deborah Tannen says, “you may jell or whisper or sing as you compose sentences, but the words as they fall on the page will not reflect this” (Tannen 1985: 131). On the other hand, those expressions can be limited or repressed by the need of documenting through recording. Additionally even if things are documented in a way that allows bigger transparency of the experience (recorded audio or video material) as evidence that the researcher is basing her texts on the experiences with people of flesh and blood, still the distortion is inevitable. “Perception, however, is never pure” so the presence on a tape or in real life is always unpredictable and unclear and its meanings are never final or clear (Denzin 1997: 34). Furthermore, when such material presence is translated into transcription with all the attention on precision, we get a pale image of the presence and of the experience. “Embalmed transcribed speech is alien talk. Everyday natural talk is visual, theatrical, inflective and rhetorical. (...) The original voices of the individuals in a field settings, and as the intentions behind those voices, can never be recovered. (...) Every transcription is a retelling – a new telling of a previously heard, now newly heard voice” (Denzin 1997: 41, 43). Traditional ethnographers were writing with the idea that interlocutors’ experiences are directly mirrored in their words and according to that the researcher’s task is to simply represent this truth. But epistemological rethinking that is suppose to give an answer to the questions asked by Geertz (and others) on representing the experience, makes us agree with the simple conclusion that there are different possibilities for representing but limited by the one who is representing which “offers strong arguments against the belief of simple or transparent world that can be known with certainty” (Van Maanen 2004: 437). For example the attitude towards the data after we move aside from the intensity of the firs context may be radically changed. Even though writing means intimate closeness with the data before putting their interpretations on paper, data can be read in different ways after a certain period of time and by the same author who has tried to become intimate with it. “We move data around, we put it in the kitchen, we carry it in our bags (or buckets), we return to it with a different set of academic reading in our minds. We can even go back to transcripts we collected 20 years ago and write a second entirely different book from the one we did the first time round. We have that academic and creative licence” (Fraser, Puwar 2008: 14). In this context it is certainly impossible to treat ethnographic field data documented in this or that way as things with fixed, unchangeable meanings that are given once and for all. Thus, in technical but in methodological sense as well, the ultimate credibility means a complementary treatment of the researcher’s experience translated into her field notes together with the recorded voices or faces of the interlocutors – of course if there is such an opportunity. At the end, when it comes to validity I have to confront the possible impression of this text about favoring one or the other technique of documenting because the point should be against favoring of one type of *evidence* over the other, or the accent on the researcher’s experience as *evidence* of validity in any kind of *documenting* habit.

Conclusion

Besides positivistic interpretations limited on narrower professional fields of certain social and humanistic disciplines and by the example from the beginning of this text with some students of ethnology and anthropology, it can be comfortably concluded that this is a very widely accepted and popular concept. Despite the fact that here the accent is put on ethnology and anthropology, still I can gladly state that these disciplines, in Macedonian context, in fact have the slightest problems with positivistic interpretations of the term science when compared with the attitudes and practices of other related disciplines. In this context it seems to me as the most illustrative example the debate on Nova TV between the professor Tatjana Stojanovska Ivanova from the Institute of sociology, and the young human rights activist Marina Trajkova. The debate was about establishing the new Institute of family studies at the Faculty of Philosophy and abolition, or putting on hold the Institute of gender studies where the young activist had graduated. Although the entire debate is exceptionally inspiring in the context of this article, its end is especially illustrative:

T.S.I.: Science is not based on presumptions and laicism. Science is based on facts and science laws and achievements.

M.T.: What is the fact for... that the values are lost?

T.S.I.: You want proof?

M.T.: Yes, proof?

T.S.I.: Well open my book from 2010 titled "Violence, aggression and sport" and you will read.

M.T.: Aha. And which values are those?

T.S.I.: Absolutely, the values are marginalized, those values...

M.T.: Which one? Accurately.

T.S.I.: Well for example respect, honesty, philanthropy...

M.T.: And how do you measure them?

T.S.I.: Well there is a scale of measurement. Do I have to lecture you now?

M.T.: Yes, because...

T.S.I.: For that you will apply for second degree of graduate academic studies and you will learn in more details about values, value discourse, moral codex, moral erosion and so on (<http://novatv.mk/index.php?navig=12&writer=2&vest=14569>).

While for the professor "in a Durkheimian sense, the facts are the law", the activists puts under question the idea about positivistic measurability of things that shine with their subjectivity. Besides all the "crisis" allegedly caused by postmodernism (representative, legitimacy crisis, interpretative crisis and all other) and the accent on plurality in every sense (a multitude of explanations, a multitude of realities, a multitude of knowledge, stories, positions, representations, a multitude of truths etc.) that makes the validity and objectivity problematic, I agree with one acquisition from postmodernism and the confusion brought by it, "Finally the anthropology students after postmodernism do not have to feel bad because **'they are not scientists'**" (my emphasis, Milenković 2007: 150).

The closure of this note with a quote from a TV debate is an important point of one of the reviewers of this text. Although the symptoms of hypochondria are imposing by *themselves* when talking about this kind of topics, the conclusion is about the need of

relaxing the objectivity concept as well as the one of value neutrality and points to the complementary use of all the different ways of *documenting* the research reality as equally valid when the researcher has that kind of opportunity. Finally the reliability grading of documents is even more problematic when the ultimate interpreter will interfere in the surface precision, that is the author of the text and finally – the audience or the readers.

Sources:

<http://novatv.mk/index.php?navig=12&writer=2&vest=14569> (last visited 13. 11. 2014).

References:

- Ашталковска Гајтаноска Ана. 2013. Идентификација на информаторите и терминологски дилеми, *Етнолог* бр. 15, МЕД, Скопје, 129–140.
- Наковски Мартин. 2005. *Теориско-методолошки аспекти на водење интервју*, дипломска работа одбранета на Институтот за етнологија и антропологија, УКИМ, Скопје.
- Петреска Весна. 2009. Нови обредни однесувања во семејството – теориско-методолошки пристап, *Етнолог* бр. 12–13, Скопје, 142–158.
- Фаерабенд Пол. 2000. *Против методот: прилог кон една анархистичка теорија на знаењето*, Темплум, Скопје.
- Barret Stanley R. 1997. *Anthropology, A Student's Guide to Theory and Method*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Buffalo, London.
- Ѓаро Џмегаќ Јасна, Гulin Zrnić Valentina, Šantek Pavel Goran (eds.). 2006. *Etnologija bliskoga, Poetika i politika savremenih terenskih istraživanja*, Institut za etnologiju i folkloristiku, Naklada Jesenski i Turk, Zagreb.
- De Munck Victor C. 2008. *Research Design and Methods for Studying Culture in the Field*. Vytautas Magnus University. Kaunas, Lithuania.
- Denzin Norman K. 1997. *Interpretative ethnography, ethnographic practices for the 21st century*, Sage Publications.
- Denzin Norman K., Lincoln Yvonna S. (eds.). 2003. *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, second edition, Sage Publications.
- DeVault Marjorie L. 2004. Talking and Listening from Women's Standpoint, Feminist Strategies for Interviewing and Analysis, in, *Feminist Perspectives on Social Research*, Hesse-Biber Sharlene and Yaiser Michelle L. (eds.), New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 227–250.
- Emerson Robert M., Fretz Rachel I., Shaw Linda L. 2001. Participant Observation and Fieldnotes, in, *Handbook of Ethnography*, Atkinson Paul, Coffey Amanda, Delamont Sara, Lofland John, Lofland Lyn (eds.), Sage Publication, 352–368.
- Esterberg Kristin G. 2002. *Qualitative Methods in Social Research*, McGraw-Hill Higher Education, Printed in the United States of America.

- Fraser Mariam, Puwar Nirmal. 2008. Introduction, intimacy in research, *History of The Human Sciences* Vol. 21, No. 4, SAGE Publications (Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore and Washington DC), 1–16, available at, <http://hhs.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/21/4/1>; last visited 23. 3. 2009.
- Gerc Kliford. 2010. *Antropolog kao pisac*, Biblioteka XX vek, Beograd.
- Guba Ergon G., Lincoln Yvonna S. 2004. Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research, Theories and Issues, in, *Approaches to Qualitative Research, A Reader on Theory and Practise*, Hesse-Biber Sharlene, Leavy Patricia (eds.), Oxford University Press, 17–38.
- Hammersley Martyn, Atkinson Paul. 2007. *Ethnography. Principles in Practice*. Routledge, London and New York.
- Hastrup Kirsten. 2004. Getting it right, Knowledge and evidence in anthropology, in, *Anthropological Theory*, SAGE Publications (London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi), Vol. 4 (4), 455–472, available at, <http://ant.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/4/4/455>; last visited 9. 10. 2009.
- Milenković Miloš. 2007. *Istorija postmoderne antropologije. Teorija etnografije*, Etnološka biblioteka, knjiga 24, Srpski genealoški centar i Odeljenje za etnologiju i antropologiju Filozofskog fakulteta u Beogradu, Beograd, available at: http://www.anthroserbia.org/Content/PDF/Publications/2_MilosMilenkovic_TeorijaEtnografije.pdf; last visited 25. 9. 2011.
- Sprague Joey, Zimmerman Mary. 2004. Overcoming Dualisms, A Feminist Agenda for Sociological Methodology, in, *Approaches to Qualitative Research, A Reader on Theory and Practise*, Hesse-Biber Sharlene, Leavy Patricia (eds.), Oxford University Press, 39–61.
- Tannen Deborah. 1985. Relative Focus on involvement in oral and written discourse, in, *Literacy, Language, and Learning, The nature and consequences of reading and writing*, Olson David R., Torrance Nancy, Hildyard Angela (eds.), Cambridge University Press, 124–147.
- Van Maanen John. 2004. An End to Innocence, The Ethnography of Ethnography, in, *Approaches to Qualitative Research, A Reader on Theory and Practise*, Sharlene Hesse-Biber, Patricia Leavy (eds.), Oxford University Press, 427–446.