ETHNOGRAPHY IN PUBLIC MANAGEMENT RESEARCH: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

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ABSTRACT: *Ethnography is defined as a research methodology based on sustained, explicit, methodical observation and paraphrasing of social situations in relation to their naturally occurring events. The value of producing local observational data over extended periods of time lies in the ability to systematically explore the subjective construction of meanings and its consequences on organizational and institutional dynamics. Based on a systematic review of published ethnographic studies in the field of public management, this article investigates how ethnography has been conceptualized and employed by the scholarly community in the past 25 years (1990–2014); it highlights the methodological features of the ethnographic design; and it outlines a set of research directions for future applications of the ethnographic approach to the study of theoretically and empirically relevant phenomena. This study contributes to the growing debate of the role of methods in public management literature in informing evidence-based managerial and policy decisions.*

INTRODUCTION

The field of public management and administration is characterized by heterogeneity in epistemic traditions, all of which add value to the development of the scholarly community (Riccucci 2010). The positivist tradition has typically been concerned with the explanation and prediction of events and behaviors so that causal relationships can be generalized (Durkheim 1938). Phenomenological and interpretivist perspectives emphasize the socially constructed nature of reality (Berger and Luckmann 1967), and have recently been advocated for understanding intention and action in the public administration domain (Ospina and Dodge 2005a; 2005b; Vickers and Kouzmin 2001). The interpretivist perspective challenges the reified view

of institutions and determinism relative to the understanding of political and policy actors (Gains 2011), and it brings people to the center of public management analysis.

Interpretivist research relies on various qualitative methodologies, the most important of which is ethnography. Ethnography is defined as ''sustained, explicit, methodical observation and paraphrasing of social situations in relation to their naturally occurring events'' (Weick 1985, 568). Compared to other traditional qualitative methodologies, such as descriptive case studies (Yin 2003), ethnography relies primarily on ''first-hand, field-based observations and experiences'' (Ybema et al. 2009, 6). The value of producing local observational data over extended periods of time lies in the ability to systematically explore the subjective construction of meanings and their consequences at organizational and institutional levels (Huby, Harries, and Grant 2011).

Prior contributions to the literature emphasized the importance of incorporating ethnographic work in the interpretive toolkits of public management and administration scholars (Ospina and Dodge 2005a; Riccucci 2010), and they documented the contributions of the ethnographic perspective to selected research areas, including policy elites (Rhodes 2011; Gains 2011), public services management (Huby, Harries, and Grant 2011), and power and politics (Yanow 2007). The scholarly community is in need of a systematic examination of state-of-the-art ethnographic research able to provide conceptual clarity to the boundaries of the approach, and to unveil the potential of ethnography in investigations of theoretically relevant phenomena.

This article asks three interrelated research questions. First, how has ethnography been conceptualized and employed by public management scholars? Second, what are the methodological features of the ethnographic design? Third, how can ethnography be used in future public management research? The article addresses these questions through a systematic review of ethnographic studies published between 1990 and 2014 in public management. Results show that the scholarly community has experienced a growing application of the methodology. A relatively marked variety is found in the features of ethnographic research design, yet motivations for adoption can be traced back to the willingness to explore three interrelated social issues: meaning making, practice structuration, and covert dynamics. Together, ethnographic studies have contributed to advancing the understanding of three major areas in public management: organizational behavior and change, collaboration and governance, and community development.

This analysis contributes to a better understanding of public management scholarship in terms of both substantive and methodological knowledge. By providing methodological guidance on the issue, it responds to Roberts and Bradley's (2002, 18) call for the establishment of a more solid research foundation in the field of public management and contributes to the growing debate about the role of methods in public management literature in informing evidence-based managerial and policy decisions (Dodge, Ospina, and Foldy 2005; Tummers and Karsten 2012; Groenveld et al. 2015).

RESEARCH STRATEGY

Data Search

This study is based on a systematic review of ethnographic studies published in the public management and administration domain developed according to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (Moher et al. 2009). Figure 1 illustrates the process used to search and select studies; Appendix 1 enumerates the checklist for each step of data collection.
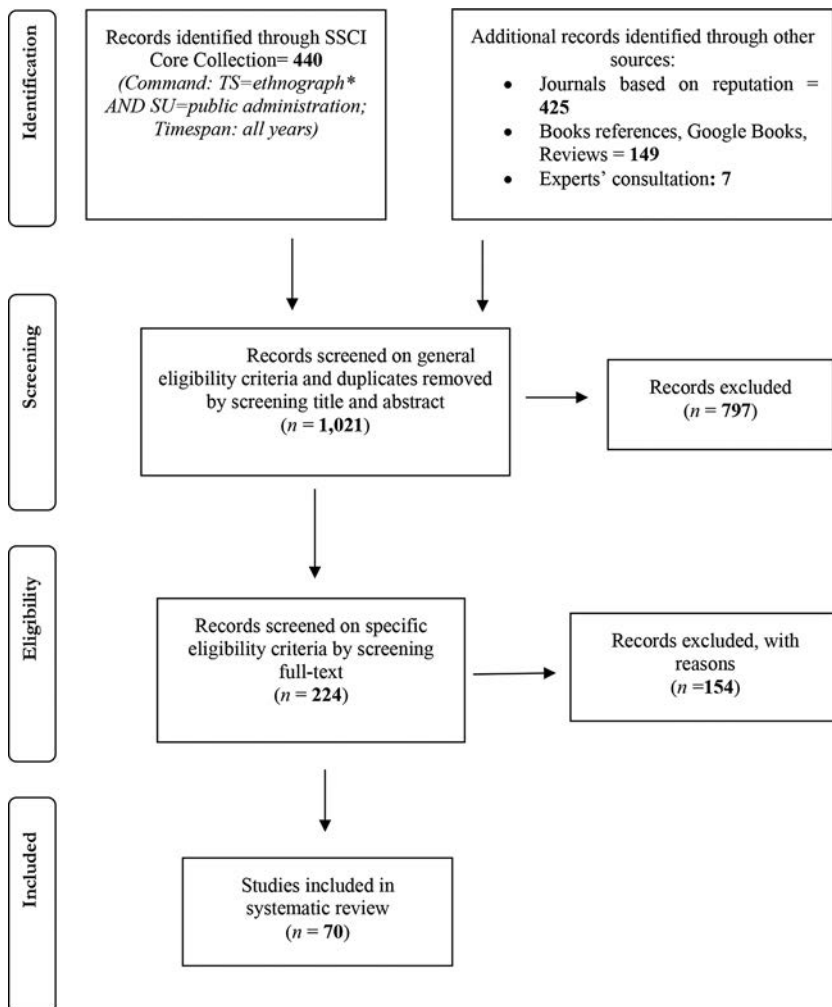

Figure 1.   Prisma flow chart.

Identification of Studies

Four strategies were used to identify eligible studies. The first was an electronic search using the ISI Web of Science Core Collection database. The Web of Science is considered to be one of the most comprehensive research platforms available worldwide; it includes a specific section devoted to public administration and public management journals (Andrews and Esteve 2015). Studies were retrieved using the following search terms: *TS = ethnograph* AND SU = public administration; Timespan: all years.* This search was last conducted in March 2015 and resulted in 440 records.

The second was a search of top-tier public administration journals, taking into account not only the impact factor but also the journal's reputation, which was assessed according to the list compiled by Bernick and Krueger (2010) and reported by Van de Walle and Van Delft (2015). Journals ranked in the top 14 were included, and articles were retrieved using the following search terms: "*ethnograph**'' in *ALL TEXT*. The journals that I selected included: *International Public Management Journal; Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory; Public Administration; Public Administration Review; Public Management Review; Governance, Administration & Society; Public Money & Management; Journal of Policy Analysis & Management;* and *Review of Public Personnel Administration*. The last search was carried out in April 2015 and generated 425 results.

The third was a search for books through the search engine Google Books using the following formulas separately: "ethnograph* NEAR/5 public administration," "ethnograph* NEAR/5 public management," and "ethnograph* NEAR/5 public policy." Additional works related to the topic were located via a snowballing procedure using the reference lists from two textbooks on ethnographic methodology: McNabb (2008) and Ybema et al. (2009). Ultimately, further contributions were located by screening reviews of ethnographic books published in public administration journals as retrieved from the ISI Web of Science. The results were double-checked using an online search of books published by well-established publishers (Routledge, Sage, Edward, Ashgate, and Oxford). This search generated 149 results and was last conducted in April 2015.

Fourth, expert public administration scholars were approached to check the list of eligible studies and suggest possible gaps, resulting in seven additional results. The last e-mail was received on October 27, 2015.

In total, 1021 articles were identified by the end of the identification stage (see Figure 1).

Inclusion Criteria and Record Selection

Following Yanow and Geuijen (2009), inclusion criteria relied on methodological (i.e., ethnography), substantive (i.e., public management), and publication genre (i.e., books, book chapter, and peer-reviewed articles) grounds. Specifically, studies were included in the systematic review during the screening stage (see Figure 1) if they fulfilled the following general criteria: (1) *Language*: Studies were included only

if published in English; (2) *Document type(s)*: Books, book chapters, and articles were the only types included to ensure the quality of the review; (3) *Type(s) of studies*: Only empirical studies based on novel data were included (i.e., no reviews; in case of multiple publications based on the same fieldwork, preference was given to the flagship publication); (4) *Years of publication*: Studies had to be published between 1990 and 2014. After applying these general criteria and removing duplicates, 797 records were excluded, leaving 224 for further selection.

Full-text records were then screened for eligibility according to a more stringent methodological criterion concerning the ethnographic research design (McNabb 2008; Ybema et al. 2009). Building on the definition of ethnography as ''a style of social science writing which draws upon the writers' close observation of and involvement with people in a particular social setting and relates the words spoken and the practices observed or experienced to the overall cultural framework within which they occurred'' (Watson 2011, 205), the following were excluded: (1) empirical studies based on mixed methods when the ethnographic part was not predominant (Yanow and Geuijen 2009); (2) studies that were not conducted ''at the scene'' (Ybema et al. 2009, 6); that is, with no clear fieldwork approaches (including extensive observational data); (3) qualitative observational studies aimed at an intervention and modification of the field, as in the case of action research studies (for the difference between action research and ethnography, see Sykes and Treleaven [2009]); and (4) in the case of books, publications that did not contain a methodology chapter/section.[1] At this stage, a second round of selection based on the substantive criterion was performed. An additional 154 studies were excluded, leaving 70 for the systematic review.

Data Analysis

To analyze the sample, a classification template sensitized by previous work (White and Adams 1994; Lan and Anders 2000; Yanow and Geuijen 2009) was developed. Two researchers (i.e., the author and a research assistant) independently coded the studies. The template contained three sections—demographics, research design, and research content—and a total of 14 items that were based on conceptually clear, mutually exclusive, and collectively exhaustive categories. The coding scheme is reported in Appendix 2. The three sections are further described as follows:

a. The Demographics section contained two subsections: (a1) *trend of published work*, which investigated the publication genre, outlet, and temporal dynamics of publishing; and (a2) *authorship,* which categorized the number of authors and the number of articles per author.
b. The Research Design section contained two subsections: (b1) *empirical context*, which provided details on the geographical location, the level of government and sector of activity involved as well as the number of field sites; and (b2) *data collection and analysis*, with a focus on data collection tools, length of the field-work, and type of data analysis.

c. The Research Content section contained two items: (c1) *reason for the choice of methodology*; and (c2) *research topic*, which captured the main thematic focus of the study.

RESULTS

Demographics

Trend of Published Work

Of the 70 ethnographic studies, 47 (67%) were published in peer-reviewed journals, 19 (27%) in books, and 4 (5%) in book chapters. The academic journals were varied, and 26 published at least one article. Those that contained the most studies included *Public Administration* (8), *Administration & Society* (4), *Public Management Review* (4), and *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* (3). Table 1 details the list of journals.

TABLE 1
Ethnographic Articles, by Journal

Journal	*N. Articles*
Public Administration	8
Administration & Society	4
Public Management Review	4
Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory	3
American Review of Public Administration	2
International Public Management Journal	2
Journal of Social Policy	2
Public Administration Review	2
Regulation & Governance	2
Social Policy & Administration	2
World Development	2
Community Development Journal	1
Development and Change	1
European Planning Studies	1
Futures	1
Housing Policy Debate	1
International Journal of Urban and Regional Research	1
Journal of Development Studies	1
Journal of Policy Analysis and Management	1
Journal of Rural Studies	1
Policy Sciences	1
Policy Studies Journal	1
Public Administration & Development	1
Public Money & Management	1
Society and Natural Resources	1

The analysis, in terms of temporal intervals (i.e., 1990–1994, 1995–1999, 2000–2004, 2005–2009, and 2010–2014), elucidated an increasing trend in the number of published studies; nine were published between 1990 and 1999, and 30 between 2010 and 2014 (Figure 2). Interestingly, while both books and journal articles increased over time, the latter contributed the most to the trend by evolving from 44% of the published studies in the 1990s to 77% in the 2010–2014 period. The rising trend in articles should be interpreted in light of the total number of publications in peer-reviewed journals. Indeed, at least three interconnected dynamics unfolded in the public management and administration field over the past quarter century. First, the number of articles published per issue increased (e.g., *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* moved from 15 original articles in 1990 to 51 in 2010, and *Public Administration* moved from 29 to 69 in the same period). Second, the number of issues per year increased (e.g., *Administration & Society* shifted from four issues in 1990 to six in 2000 and eight in 2010). Third, new journals supportive of qualitative studies were launched (e.g., *Public Management Review* in 1999). In other terms, evidence seemed to suggest that the increase in published ethnographic studies was bolstered by an increase in the total number of published peer-reviewed articles. Hence, while ethnography did not replace existing methodologies, its increased use paralleled—and signaled—the affirmation of methodological pluralism in the public management field.

Authorship

Two major insights about authorship can be drawn from the sample. First, the vast majority of the studies were single-author studies (47; 67%). The two-author (10; 14%) and three-author (13; 19%) studies were in the minority. This finding is consistent with the ethnographic methodology that typically requires a researcher
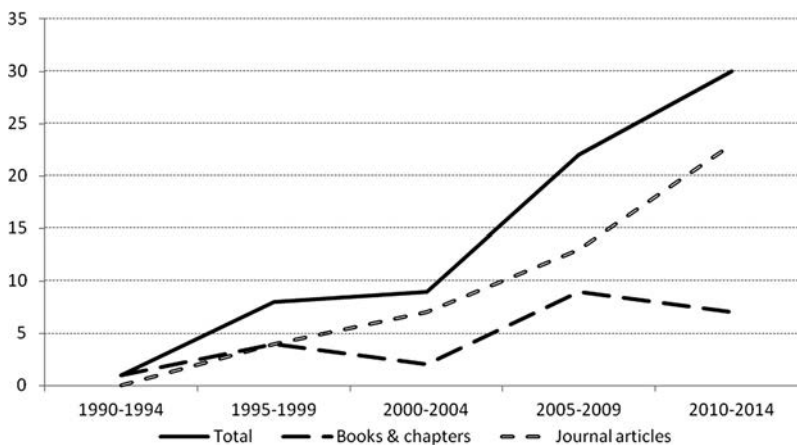

Figure 2.   Published studies by temporal interval and publication genre.

to develop an in-depth and first-hand immersion and understanding of the field. Furthermore, seven authors published more than one study. While this result confirms that ethnographies are frequently one-time life journeys requiring a substantive investment of time and are thus conducted during selected periods of one's academic career, it should also be interpreted as a conservative figure because this sample was screened to include only original empirical work.

Research Design

The second set of analyses concerns the research design in terms of the empirical context of the research, the data collection and length of time in the field, and the data analysis.

Empirical Context

The majority of ethnographies were conducted in Europe (27; 39%). The remainder, in order of prevalence, were conducted in the United States and Canada (20; 29%); Russia, the Middle East, and Asia (9; 13%); Africa (5; 7%); international (i.e., United Nations) and supranational (i.e., European Union) levels (5; 7%); Australia (2; 3%); and South America (1; 1%). Table 2 shows the details of fieldwork location for the included studies.

This result confirms that the ethnographic design, though it originated in the anthropological realm for the study of primitive cultures, is primarily employed for the understanding of close-to-home societies and dynamics. Specifically, the vast majority of studies addressed issues at the local government level (36; 51%), and the remainder addressed issues at the central government level (22; 31%),[2] the community level (7; 10%), or the international or supranational level with specific reference to the European Union and the United Nations (5; 7%). The activities and branches of government studied were primarily the local public services (32), which included welfare (13), health (8), security, police, and firemen (8), and university and other school-provided education (3). Others were the executive government branch (13), public agencies (10), legislative government branch (2), the judiciary government branch (2), non-profits (5), citizens groups (4), or other (2). These results provide an indirect proxy for the degree of openness of public organizations.

Finally, analysis of the number of sites reveals that ethnographies are traditionally conducted at a single site (46; 66%); most frequently, a single organization or a single collaborative endeavor. However, examples of multiple-site ethnographies are not infrequent; sometimes an ethnography encompasses two (10; 14%) or three sites (6; 9%). A minority conducted fieldwork in more than three sites (8; 11%).

Data Collection and Length of Fieldwork

All included studies collected qualitative data through a mix of (non-) participant observation (e.g., shadowing or attending events), interviews (semi-structured

TABLE 2
Empirical Context: Country of Fieldwork

Continent	Country	N. of studies	Studies
Europe	United Kingdom	16	Crewe 2005; Currie et al. 2008; Davies et al. 2008; Durose 2009; Finn 2006; Hall 1999; Hewison 2002; Kinder 2012; Oborn et al. 2011; Renedo et al. 2014; Rhodes 2005; Rhodes 2011; Stevens 2011; Wakefield 2008; Waring 2013; Wilkinson 2011
	Netherlands	5	Broer et al. 2012; Meershoek 2012; Oldenhof et al. 2013; t'Hart 2007; van't Klooster et al. 2006 ;
	Denmark	2	Ratner 2012; Boll 2014
	France	2	Dubois 2010; Latour 2009
	Belgium	1	Bernard 2008;
	Sweden	1	Czarniawka 1997
North America	US	19	Brodkin 2011; Brunner et al. 1998; Chetkovich 1997; Cooney 2007; Donahue 2011; Eilers 2002; Eliasoph 2011; Feldman et al. 2009; Huising et al. 2010; Ingersoll 1992; Maynard-Moody 2003; Moskos 2008; Poncelet 2001; Randles 2014; Rich 1996; Sandford 2000; Sandford 2003; Shaw 2012; Soss 1999
	Canada	1	Bridgman 2002
Russia, Middle East and East	Russia	2	Kay 2013; Sweet 2009
	Israel	2	Hajjar 2005; Yanow 1996
	China	1	Dai 2014
	Cambodia	1	Morrison 2010
	South Korea	1	Kim 2013
	Turkey	1	Kayaalp 2012
	India	1	Mosse 2005
Africa	South Africa	2	Colvin et al. 2010; Marks 2008
	Botswana	1	Mbaiwa 2011
	Ghana	1	Chalfin 2010
	Zimbabwe	1	Robins 1998
Australia	Australia	2	Gordon 2009, Rhodes et al. 2014
South America	Suriname and French Guyana	1	Heemskerk et al. 2004
International	United Nations	1	Flyverbom 2011
	European Union	4	Shore 2000; Shore 2007; Thedvall 2007; Geujen et al. 2007
Multi-country	Spain, Brazil, France	1	Ganuza, Nez, and Morales 2014

interviews, unstructured/informal/ethnographic interviews, or elite interviews), and, to a lesser extent, archival and documentary sources. Recent work has also emphasized the role of focus groups (Rhodes and Tiernan, 2014).

While the studies confirmed the primary role of participant observation in the data collection strategy, they nonetheless differed in the extensiveness of engagement with the field (Figure 3). This information is important in that ''generating ethnographic knowledge requires the researcher to be part of the community being researched, spending time interacting and observing the everyday life'' (Gains 2011, 157) to generate a ''thick description'' (Geertz 1973). The total length of fieldwork, which typically included both intense periods and periods of more sporadic presence in the field, was most frequently between one and two years (19), but other study periods lasted six months to one year (13), two to three years (8), three to five years (8), more than five years (8), or less than six months (6). Eight studies did not specify the length of their fieldwork.

Data Analysis

Differences between the studies were seen in data collection methods, but more marked differences were seen in the data analyses. As Yanow (1996) vividly contends, data collection alone does not convey *how* meanings are drawn from the data. Hence, analyzing how the studies made sense of what was collected is important. Four major types of data analyses emerged from the studies. Nineteen studies adopted the most common type, that of a deductive coding technique, and these were either thematic-/content-based or theory-informed-based. A study exemplifying this approach was that of Gordon, Kornberger, and Clegg (2009), which used theoretical framing of dialectical opposites. A few cases employed a mix of deductive and inductive codings, such as the use of a theoretically informed codebook with an inductive population of constructs (Hall 2000; Rhodes and Thiernan 2014).

The second type of analysis that emerged was seen in 11 studies. They explicitly adopted grounded theory approaches (Strauss and Corbin 1998; Glaser and Strauss
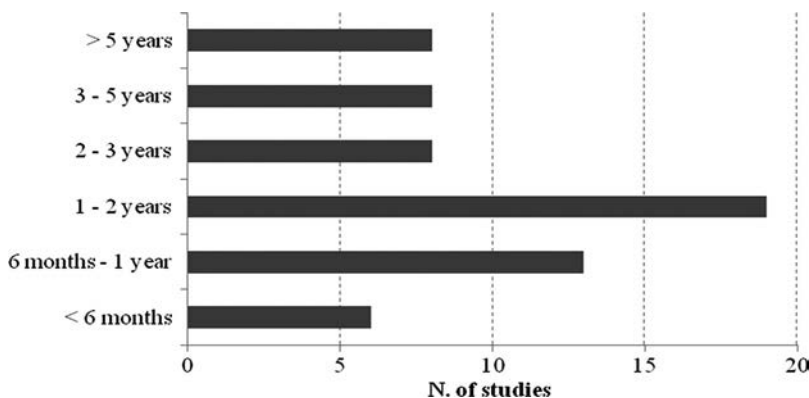

Figure 3. Research design: Length in the field.

1967) in their research traditions (for an examination on the use of grounded theory in public administration research, see Tummers and Karsten 2012). Waring and colleagues exemplify use of the analytical lens:

> Data analysis was informed by the principles of interpretative grounded theory (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Strauss and Corbin 1990). It involved an iterative process of close reading of data, coding, constant comparison, elaboration of emerging themes, and reengagement with the wider literature (Waring, Currie, and Bishop 2013, 317).

In a few cases, grounded theory was used as the first analytical device, and the emerging results were then interpreted in light of existing theories (Bernard 2008; Feldman and Quick 2009):

> Data were analyzed using standard coding, categorizing, and memoing techniques (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1990; Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995; Lofland and Lofland 1995). We then interpreted this information through a variety of methods to expose different facets of the data—including semiotic (Feldman 1995), narrative (Czarniawska 2004; Feldman, Skoldberg, Brown, and Horner 2004), networked narrative (Pentland and Feldman 2007), dramaturgical (Abbott 2004), and ethnomethodological frameworks (Garfinkel 1967; Heritage 1984). These methods allowed us to question some of the assumptions embedded in the ways (Feldman and Quick 2009, 145).

The third type of data analysis was seen in 13 studies employing narrative and discourse analytical techniques (e.g., Czarniawska 1997; Davies and Thomas 2008), which led to confessional and impressionist perspectives (Rhodes 2005; 2011). Durose justifies the use of story-based analysis:

> Story-based analysis was also seen as providing an appropriate and effective means of obtaining a ''decentred'' account (. . .). Narratives are useful data because individuals often make sense of the world and their place in it through narrative form (. . .). Storytelling and understanding are functionally the same thing. (Durose 2009, 41)

Finally, a small set of studies (4) employed other interpretive inquiry techniques or multiple analytical methods. In eight studies, the strategy used to analyze the data was not specified.

Research Content

Content in the published work was assessed by examining both the topic of the study and the reasons stated by the authors for choosing the ethnographic methodology.

Reasons for the Choice of Ethnography

Reasons for adoption of an ethnographic design could be classified into three categories. While these categories were frequently intertwined in the reality of ethnographic fieldwork, I will hereby refer to the primary reason elaborated by the various authors. In the majority (29; 41%) of studies, the choice was made because of a willingness to adopt an ''emic'' perspective, which takes the point of view of the informants (Van Maanen 1988) and studies how meaning and local interpretations emerge and are made sense of. These meanings come from local translations of global issues (Kayaalp 2012; Morrison 2010) or from the inner essence of organizational culture and rituals (Crewe 2005). Hence, the value of ethnography lies in the richness of the contextual approach.

Almost as popular, a desire to study the incremental and processual nature of reality was used as justification in 24 (34%) studies. In these studies, the authors contended that change does not occur at discrete times, but is rather the product of ongoing patterns of interaction that give rise over time to the emergence and structuration of bottom-up practices (Sandfort 2000; 2003; Donahue and O'Leary 2011). By employing systematic and prolonged observations, ethnography is the most powerful method to track behavioral patterns, particularly when retrospective data-gathering techniques and real-time interview techniques cannot be used. As Barley (1990, 228) noted: "Sustained observation is crucial for tracing the evolution of social institutions (. . .). Unless one observes, one is unlikely to uncover the behaviors and interpretations that compose social reality."

Finally, in a smaller group (10; 14%) of studies, the reason was to have the ability to investigate covert social dynamics. These dynamics refer to sensitive issues people do not want to talk about unless they are familiar with and trust the researcher, such as when stigma might be provoked, as with HIV (Colvin, Robins, and Leavens 2010). Similarly, they refer to intangible issues, such as power (Brunner and Schumaker 1998; Broer, Nieboer, and Bal 2012), inner values (Marks 2008), or tacit knowledge (Finn and Waring 2006), which cannot be captured by standard interview-based methods. In seven studies, the authors did not explicitly justify their use of the ethnographic methodology.

Research Topics

The choice of methodology was intrinsically linked to the research question and the topic under investigation. Three categories of topics emerged: organizational behavior and change, collaboration and participatory governance, and service and community building. Table 3 summarizes the literature, employing the ethnographic approach according to the categorization scheme.

Organizational behavior and change. The largest number (42; 60%) of ethnographic studies explored the inner life of public organizations in three research venues: the study of organizational culture, the everyday work of public servants (both frontline workers and elite bureaucrats), and the dynamics of organizational change.

TABLE 3

Summary of Literature Pertaining to Ethnography in Public Management

Authors	Year of publication	Article	Publication
Organizational behavior and change			
Culture, routines			
Brunner, C. C., and Schumaker, P.	1998	Power and Gender in the "New View" Public Schools	*Policy Studies Journal* 26(1): 30–45
Chetkovich, C.	1997	Real Heat: Gender and Race in the Urban Fire Services	Rutgers University Press
Eliasoph, N.	2011	Making Volunteers: Civic Life after Welfare's End: Civic Life after Welfare's End	Princeton University Press
Hall, C.	2000	Telecommunications Regulation	Routledge
Hajjar, L.	2005	Courting Conflict: The Israeli Military Court System in the West Bank and Gaza	University of California Press
Ingersoll, V. H. and Adams, G. B.	1992	The Tacit Organization	JAI Press
Moskos, P.	2009	Cop in the Hood: My Year Policing Baltimore's Eastern District	Princeton University Press
Wakefield, A.	2008	Private Policing: A View from the Mall	*Public Administration* 86(3): 659–678
Yanow, D.	1996	How Does a Policy Mean? Interpreting Policy and Organizational Actions	Georgetown University Press
Street-level bureaucrats			
Boll	2014	Shady Car Dealings and Taxing Work Practices: An Ethnography of a Tax Audit Process	*Accounting, Organization and Society* 39: 1–19
Chalfin, B.	2010	Neoliberal Frontiers: An Ethnography of Sovereignty in West Africa	University of Chicago Press
Cooney, K.	2007	Fields, Organizations, and Agency: Toward a Multilevel Theory of Institutionalization in Action	*Administration & Society* 39(6): 687–718

Author	Year	Title	Source
Dubois, P. V.	2010	The Bureaucrat and the Poor: Encounters in French Welfare Offices	Ashgate Publishing Limited
Durose, C.	2009	Front-Line Workers and Local Knowledge: Neighbourhood Stories in Contemporary UK Local Governance	*Public Administration* 87(1): 35–49
Huising, R. and Silbey, S.	2010	Governing the Gap: Forging Safe Science through Relational Regulation	*Regulation & Governance* 5(1): 14–42
Maynard-Moody, S.Musheno, M.	2003	Cops, Teachers, Counsellors: Stories from the Front Lines of Public Service	University of Michigan Press
Meershoek, A.	2012	Controlling Access to Sick Leave Programmes: Practices of Physicians in the Netherlands	*Social Policy & Administration* 46(5): 544–561
Oldenhof, L., Postma, J. and Putters K.	2013	On Justification Work: How Compromising Enables Public Managers to Deal with Conflicting Values	*Public Administration Review* 74(1): 52–63
Rich, W. C.	1996	The Moral Choices of Garbage Collectors: Administrative Ethics from Below	*American Review of Public Administration* 26(2): 201–212
Sandfort, J. R.	2003	Exploring the Structuration of Technology within Human Service Organizations	*Administration & Society* 34(6): 605–631
Sandfort, J R.	2000	Moving Beyond Discretion and Outcomes: Examining Public Management from the Front Lines of the Welfare System	*Journal of Public Administration Research & Theory* 10(4): 729
Wilkinson, K.	2011	Organised Chaos: An Interpretive Approach to Evidence-Based Policy Making in Defra	*Political Studies* 59: 959–977

Government elites

Author	Year	Title	Source
Crewe, E.	2005	Lords of Parliament: Manners, Rituals and Politics	Manchester University Press
Geuijen, K, t'Hart, P., andYesilkagit, K.	2007	Dutch Eurocrats at Work: Getting Things Done in Europe	In: *Observing Government Elites: Up Close and Personal*, edited by R. A. W. Rhodes, P. Hart, and M. Noordegraaf, Palgrave

(Continued)

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TABLE 3

Continued

Authors	Year of publication	Article	Publication
Latour, B.	2009	The Making of Law: An Ethnography of the Conseil d'Etat	Polity Press
Oborn, E., Barrett, M., Exworthy, M.	2011	Policy Entrepreneurship in the Development of Public Sector Strategy: The Case of London Health Reform	*Public Administration* 89(2): 325–344
Rhodes, R. A. W.	2005	Everday Life in a Ministry: Public Administration as Anthropology	*American Review of Public Administration* 35(1): 3–25
Rhodes, R. A. W.	2011	Everyday Life in British Government	OUP Oxford
Rhodes, R. A.W. and Tiernan A.	2014	Lessons of Governing: A Profile or Prime Ministers' Chiefs of Staff	Melbourne University Press
Shore, C.	2000	Building Europe: The Cultural Politics of European Integration	Routledge
Shore, C	2007	European Integration in Anthropological Perspective: Studying the "Culture" of the EU Civil Service	In *Observing Government Elites: Up Close and Personal*, edited by R. A. W. Rhodes, P. Hart, and M. Noordegraaf, Palgrave
Stevens, A.	2011	Telling Policy Stories: An Ethnographic Study of the Use of Evidence in Policy-making in the UK	*Journal of Social Policy* 40: 237–255
Thedvall, R.	2007	The EU's Nomads: National Eurocrats in European Policymaking	In *Observing Government Elites: Up Close and Personal*, edited by R. A. W. Rhodes, P. Hart, and M. Noordegraaf, Palgrave
Organizational change			
Currie, G., Waring, J., and Finn, R.	2008	The Limits of Knowledge Management for UK Public Services Modernization: The Case of Patient Safety and Service Quality	*Public Administration* 86(2): 363–385

Author	Year	Title	Source
Czarniawska, B.	1997	Narrating the Organization: Dramas of Institutional Identity	The University of Chicago Press
Davies, A., and Thomas, R.	2008	Dixon of Dock Green Got Shot! Policing Identity Work and Organizational Change	*Public Administration* 86(3): 627–642
Donahue, A. K., and O'Leary, R.	2011	Do Shocks Change Organizations? The Case of NASA	*Journal of Public Administration Research & Theory* 22(3): 395–425
Gordon, R. A. Y., Kornberger, M., and Clegg, S.R.	2009	Power, Rationality and Legitimacy in Public Organizations	*Public Administration* 87(1): 15–34
Hewison, A.	2002	Managerial Values and Rationality in the UK National Health Service	*Public Management Review* 4(4): 549–579
Kayaalp, E.	2012	Torn in Translation: An Ethnographic Study of Regulatory Decision-making in Turkey	*Regulation & Governance* 6(2): 225–241
Kinder, T.	2012	Learning, Innovating and Performance in Post-New Public Management of Locally Delivered Public Services	*Public Management Review* 14(3): 403–428
Marks, M.	2008	Looking Different, Acting Different: Struggles for Equality within the South African Police Service	*Public Administration* 86(3): 643–658
Ratner, H.	2012	"It was the night of the long knives": When Public Management Collides with Group Identities	*Public Management Review* 14(1): 23–40
T'Hart, P.	2007	Spies at the Cross-Road	In: *Observing Government Elites: Up Close and Personal*, edited by R. A. W. Rhodes, P. Hart, and M. Noordegraaf, Palgrave
Collaboration and participatory governance			
Bernard, B.	2008	Emerging Indicators and Bureaucracy: From the Iron Cage to the Metric Cage	*International Public Management Journal* 4(11): 463–480

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(Continued)

TABLE 3
Continued

Authors	Year of publication	Article	Publication
Broer, T., Nieboer, A. P. and Bal, R.	2012	Governing Mental Health Care: How Power is Exerted in and through a Quality Improvement Collaborative	*Public Administration* 90(3): 800–815
Eilers, A. M.	2002	School-Linked Collaborative Services and Systems Change: Linking Public Agencies with Public Schools	*Administration & Society* 34(3): 285–308
Feldman, M. S., and Quick, K.	2009	Generating Resources and Energizing Frameworks through Inclusive Public Management	*International Public Management Journal* 12(2): 137–171
Flyverbom, M.	2011	The Power of Networks: Organizing the Global Politics of the Internet	Edward Elgar Publishing
Ganuza, E., Nez, H., and Morales E.	2014	The Struggle for a Voice: Tensions between Associations and Citizens in Participatory Budgeting	*International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 38(6): 2274–2291
Kim, S.	2013	Voluntary Organizations as New Street-Level Bureaucrats: Frontline Struggles of Community Organizations against Bureaucratization in a South Korean Welfare-to-Work Partnership	*Social Policy & Administration* 47(5): 565–585
Mbaiwa, J. E., Stronza, A., and Kreuter U.	2011	From Collaboration to Conservation: Insights from the Okavango Delta, Botswana	*Society & Natural Resources* 24(4): 400–411
Morrison, J. K.	2010	From Global Paradigms to Grounded Policies: Local Socio-Cognitive Constructions of International Development Policies and Implications for Development Management	*Public Administration and Development* 30(2): 159–174

Poncelet, E. C.	2001	Personal Transformation in Multistakeholder Environmental Partnerships	*Policy Sciences* 34(3–4): 273–301
Renedo, A., Marston, C. A., Spyridonidis, D., and Barlow, J.	2014	Patient and Public Involvement in Healthcare Quality Improvement: How Organizations Can Help Patients and Professionals to Collaborate	*Public Management Review* 17(1): 17–34
Robins, S.	1998	Breaking out of the Straitjacket of Tradition: The Politics and Rhetoric of "Development" in Zimbabwe	*World Development* 26(9): 1677–1694
Soss, J.	1999	Welfare Application Encounters: Subordination, Satisfaction, and the Puzzle of Client Evaluations	*Administration & Society* 31(1): 50–94
Waring, J., Currie, G., and Bishop, S.	2013	A Contingent Approach to the Organization and Management of Public–Private Partnerships: An Empirical Study of English Health Care	*Public Administration Review* 73(2): 313–326
Service and community building			
Bridgman, R.	2002	Housing Chronically Homeless Women: "Inside" a Safe Haven	*Housing Policy Debate* 13(1): 51–81
Colvin, C. J., Robins, S., and Leavens, J.	2010	Grounding "Responsibilisation Talk": Masculinities, Citizenship and HIV in Cape Town, South Africa	*Journal of Development Studies* 46(7): 1179–1195
Dai, H.	2014	The Discontents of Reform: Boundary Work and Welfare Stigma at Mixed Elder Homes in China	*Journal of Social Policy* 43(3): 497–515
Heemskerk, M., Norton, A., and De Dehn, L.	2004	Does Public Welfare Crowd Out Informal Safety Nets? Ethnographic Evidence from Rural Latin America	*World Development* 32(6): 941–955
Kay, R.	2013	(Un)caring Communities: Processes of Marginalisation and Access to Formal and Informal Care and Assistance in Rural Russia	*Journal of Rural Studies* 27(1): 45–53

(Continued)

TABLE 3

Continued

Authors	Year of publication	Article	Publication
Mosse, D.	2005	Cultivating Development	Pluto Press.
Randles, J.	2014	Partnering and Parenting in Poverty: A Qualitative Analysis of a Relationship Skills Program for Low-Income, Unmarried Families	*Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 33(2): 385–412
Shaw, S. J.	2012	Governing How We Care: Contesting Community and Defining Difference in U.S.	Temple University Press
Sweet, E.	2009	Ethnographic Understandings of Gender and Economic Transition in Siberia: Implications for Planners and Policy Makers	*European Planning Studies* 17(5): 697–713

Together, these studies investigated human behavior in organizational settings, the interface between human behavior and the organization, and the organization itself.

Studies of organizational culture and subcultures (Brunner and Schumaker 1998; Chetkovich 1997; Eliasoph 2011; Hall 2000; Hajjar 2005; Ingersoll and Adams 1992; Moskos 2009; Wakefield 2008; Yanow 1996) have traditionally been at the forefront of ethnographic research. Insights explore the constitutive nature of language and objects to express meanings and routines (Yanow 1996), recruiting systems and socialization practices (Moskos 2009; Chetkovich 1997), and leadership perception (Brunner and Schumaker 1998) with a specific focus on the roles of power relations, gender differences, and racial differences. Recent studies have revealed an increasing interest in private and voluntary organizations (Kim 2013; Wakefield 2008; Eliasoph 2011).

Following the seminal work of Lipsky (1980), a second subset of studies focused on the frontline conditions and work of street-level bureaucrats and middle-range officials (Boll 2014; Chalfin 2010; Cooney 2007; Dubois 2010; Durose 2009; Huising and Silbey 2010; Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2003; Meershoek 2012; Oldenhof, Postma, and Putters 2013; Rich 1996; Sandfort 2000; 2003; Wilkinson 2011). By investigating the practices of service delivery, these studies shed light on human agency beyond the normative imperatives and reveal the distinctive role of discretion conceived of as the property of keeping organizational activities within an acceptable range of variation close to regulatory specifications (Huising and Silbey 2010). Discretion is evident not only in the implementation of formal rules, but also in the ability to define parameters that, in turn, shape actions and interpretations (Sandfort 2000). Local knowledge is a key element in developing locally appropriate strategies by frontline workers (Durose 2009). Importantly, the interaction between the bureaucrat and the clients can result not only in personalization of the service delivered (Dubois 2010), but also in a proactive agency on behalf of the professional, which might lead to changes in clients' behaviors (Meershoek 2012). Even so, discretion in organizational practices is bounded by organizational conditions and governance arrangements (Brodkin 2011).

A different, yet complementary, number of studies investigated behavior and agency of government elites and top bureaucrats both at the national and supranational levels (Crewe 2005; Geuijen, t'Hart, and Yesilkagit 2007; Latour 2010; Oborn, Barrett, and Exworthy 2011; Rhodes 2005; 2011; Rhodes and Thiernan 2014; Shore 2000; 2007; Stevens 2011; Thedvall 2007). These studies, which can be better characterized as political ethnographies with an anthropological sensitivity, display an interest in the practice of policy making and provide a vivid account of the advantages and pitfalls of the pragmatism of the *modus operandi* of policy-making civil servants (Thedvall 2007; Stevens 2011).

Finally, an important number of studies addressed organizational change and innovation (Currie, Waring, and Finn 2008; Czarniawska 1997; Davies and Thomas 2008; Donahue and O'Leary 2011; Gordon, Kornberger, and Clegg 2009; Hewison 2002; Kayaalp 2012; Kinder 2012; Marks 2008; Ratner 2012; t'Hart 2007). The imperative for change derives from external factors such as shocks (Donahue and O'Leary 2011) or policy-driven innovations (Currie, Waring, and Finn 2008). Even so, change and innovation might result from internal sources such as a paradoxical enactment of organizational routines (Czarniawska 1997) and the sustained

engagement in practices of organizational learning (Kinder 2012). Organizational change has generative effects on individual properties, as in the case of public-servant identities (Ratner 2012). While positive change efforts have been documented in the literature, ethnographic insights have highlighted the sources of resistance to change, which has emphasized the roles of discursive strategies (Davies and Thomas 2008), power and legitimacy (Gordon, Kornberger, and Clegg 2009), and cultures, schemas, and values (Marks 2008).

Collaboration and participatory governance. A second set (14; 20%) of studies focused on collaboration and participatory governance. Six studies explored the dynamics of participatory governance, which is defined as citizen engagement through deliberative practices, and its impact on service delivery and performance (Ganuza, Nez, and Morales 2014; Feldman and Quick 2009; Bernard 2008; Renedo et al. Barlow 2014; Robins 1998; Soss 1999). Examples included studies on participatory budgeting (Ganuza, Nez, and Morales 2014; Feldman and Quick 2009), mechanisms of co-production and client engagement (Renedo et al. 2014), and evaluation judgment of application encounters (Soss 1999). A complementary set of studies focused on the underpinnings of partnerships and networks, both among public agencies (Broer, Nieboer, and Bal 2012; Eilers 2002) in collaboration with public, private, and nonprofit organizations (Kim 2013; Waring, Currie, and Bishop 2013; Mbaiwa, Stronza, and Kreuter 2011; Poncelet 2001) and among global networks (Morrison 2010; Flyverbom 2011).

Service and community building. A final set (9; 13%) of studies focused on welfare reforms and their impact on community building (Bridgman 2002; Colvin, Robins, and Leavens 2010; Dai 2014; Heemskerk, Norton, and De Dehn 2004; Kay 2013; Mosse 2005; Randles 2014; Shaw 2012; Sweet 2009). The majority of these studies adopted a social policy perspective and were primarily conducted in transitional or developing countries or emarginated neighborhoods of Western cities. Ethnographic data support an understanding of the effects of current economic development plans in the context of social and gender norms (Sweet 2009), access to formal and informal care (Kay 2013), and chronic homeless programs (Bridgman 2002).

DISCUSSION

This work reviews 25 years of ethnographic studies in public management research to show how ethnography constitutes a vibrant and promising methodology for the development of this scholarly field. While previous studies documented the contribution of an ethnographic perspective to selected public management and policy areas (Gains 2011; Huby, Harries, and Grant 2011; Yanow 2007; Ospina and Dodge 2005a; 2005b; Fleming 2008), the systematic review approach adopted in this work makes it possible to provide conceptual clarity on the construct and map the heterogeneity and richness of the studies published in the public management realm. In so doing, the analysis provides a number of transferable results that nurture the debate on research methods in public administration research (Roberts and Bradley 2002; Dodge, Ospina, and Foldy 2005; Tummers and Karsten 2012; Groenveld et al.

2015). Specifically, findings contribute to a better understanding of public management scholarship in terms of both substantive and methodological knowledge.

Results demonstrate that the scholarly community has experienced a growing application for ethnographic studies, together with a relative shift in publication genres and the increasing weight placed on articles in peer-reviewed public management journals. It is important to emphasize that the rising trend in ethnographic articles paralleled an increase in the total number of publications in peer-reviewed journals in the public management field over the past quarter century. This trend was motivated by a number of causes, including increases in the number of articles published per issue and the number of issues published per year, as well as the establishment of new journals supportive of qualitative methods. Hence, while ethnography was not substituted for existing methodologies, its increased use signaled the affirmation of methodological pluralism in the public management field.

The analysis provides an empirical confirmation that ethnography is a particularly suitable research design for the investigation of three interrelated social dynamics: meaning making, which refers to how people interpret social realities, how cultural beliefs and traditions mediate the interpretation, and how, in turn, this understanding explains people's behaviors in their daily work; practice structuration, which describes how social institutions are the product of ongoing patterns of interaction and change occurring from the ''bottom up'' as an incremental sedimentation of behaviors and interpretations; and covert social dynamics, such as deviant or stigmatized behavior. These motivations reveal that ethnography has been used by both naturalist and interpretive scholars. The former are concerned with the systematic mapping of phenomena to develop causal explanations and ''treat ethnography as a *method for collecting data*'' (Rhodes 2016, 172; emphasis added); the latter, motivated by the affirmation of the interpretivist (Yanow 2007) and narrative inquiry (Ospina and Dodge 2005a; 2005b) in the public management field, are interested in studying how systems of meanings are formed and conceive ethnography as the chief ''*methodological lens to recover such meanings*'' (Rhodes 2016, 173; emphasis added).

Overall, ethnography has the potential to contribute to the theoretical development of the field by encouraging one to, in Ospina and Dodge's terms, ''explore and highlight the multidimensional aspects of public institutions and their administrative and policy problems'' (2005a, 144). More specifically, ethnographic research published thus far advanced our understanding of a number of important themes in public management in the areas of organizational behavior and change, collaboration and governance, and community development. Ethnographic insights contributed to a better theorization of the work of street-level bureaucrats showing how ''current public management techniques are based on assumptions that are not supported by empirical investigations in front line conditions'' (Sandfort 2000, 752). Studies revealed the roles of bureaucrats' discretion and showed their consequences not only in terms of variation in implementation, but also in the active (re)interpretation and construction of performance systems and in fostering behavioral changes in clients. Future studies could investigate the extent to which these ethnographic insights hold with the emergence of new technological and organizational imperatives such as crowd-sourcing design, open sourcing, and virtual organizing. Similarly, studies of the behaviors of the policy

elite moved from the consideration that extant body of knowledge obscured "the link between these various facets (demographic characteristics, behaviors, acts and institutional context), as understood by the elites in their practical reasoning and practices on the job" (Rhodes, t'Hart, and Noordegraaf 2007, 5). They pointed to the role of pragmatism in policymaking and to the strategic use of policy devices and evidence. Finally, while a minority continued to compare with organizational ethnographies, studies of collaboration and networks are gaining prominence as they reveal the micro-foundations of partnerships and their effects on performance. Future studies could zoom into specific dimensions, such as the dynamics of distributed leadership (Currie, Grubnic, and Hodges 2011) and the interplay of hard- and soft-emotional aspects (Davies and Thomas 2008). Here, ethnographies are particularly suitable for unveiling the dynamics of power as a contextual achievement and to move beyond the analysis of psychological traits to investigate the interaction of practices and styles of leadership. Similarly, studies of global and transnational networks could benefit from the adoption of institutional ethnographic approaches to theorize the link between global and local dynamics with specific reference to the creation of collective identities and the conditions under which these identities could become generative of collective action.

Besides the substantive aspect, this article contributes first and foremost to increasing methodological knowledge of public management scholars. It is one of the first studies that systematically unpacks the black box of *how* ethnographies are conducted by elaborating and applying a set of analytical dimensions that characterize the research design of ethnography as a methodology. These include, among others, the number and type of research sites, the length of fieldwork, and the nature of the data analysis. Given the intense degree of engagement with the field, the selections of both the level and unit of analysis are inextricably linked with empirical design motivations, in terms of the ability to be granted access to, and permanence in, the research site. Analysis of the length of field work confirms that ethnographies require long-term engagements on behalf of the researchers; an average of one to two years is consistent with the best practices for data collection. Selection of the research site could also be considered as an indirect proxy for the degree of openness in public organizations. While central governments and policy elites are increasing their levels of transparency and are allowing themselves to be studied "from within," results show that local governments and service delivery organizations remain the most frequently chosen study settings. Finally, a relatively high degree of heterogeneity was found in the sample when it came to the data analysis strategies. The prevalence of thematic and theory-informed coding techniques seems to suggest that researchers use ethnographic data primarily to corroborate and expand existing theories. This approach could be related to the tradition of naturalist ethnographies. The increasing use of narrative devices and grounded theory approaches unveil, by contrast, the need to "go beyond the bounds of a science based on verification" (Taylor 1971, 45, cited in Rhodes 2016) and the adoption of the ethnographic design as a primary means for theory generation and meaning making, typical of interpretive ethnographies.

An understanding and further elaboration of these methodological dimensions are important for validating a standard set of quality criteria to be employed in submissions as well as in the review processes. Indeed, the use of the ethnography poses

potential challenges both during fieldwork and during the writing up and dissemination phase. The most relevant is the role and subjectivity of the researcher in the field. Immersion in the research for long periods of time can lead the researcher to develop empathy, be exposed to ethical issues, and lose perceived objectivity (Johnson 1975). Furthermore, it is often argued that ethnographic research lacks internal and external validity, and that accounts are storytelling exercises with limited generalizability. How can we ensure that public management scholars can fully embrace ethnography in their methodological toolkit? A number of recommendations are suggested. First, scholars need to be aware of when ethnography is suitable and when it is not. Ethnographies are appropriate whenever the empirical unit of analysis is concerned with the investigation: (1) of new phenomena; (2) of cases in which informants do not want to reveal their preferences, such as during covert or deviant behaviors; and (3) of cases in which informants are not able to elaborate on their preferences, primarily because the cumulative consequences of a phenomenon manifest with a time lag effect. As empirical knowledge on a theoretical topic solidifies, researchers should consider both alternative qualitative methodological frameworks, such as comparative case study designs (Yin 2003) able to expand the emerging propositions, and mixed methods approaches, such as qualitative comparative analyses (Ragin 1987) able to test and confirm propositions through the analysis of a relatively high number of cases.

Second, the researcher should be explicit as to the epistemic approach guiding the ethnographic study and ensure that the research design and reported findings are consistent with it. The quality criteria of interpretivist research have been recognized and codified in the research methods tradition and they include credibility, transferability, and authenticity, which parallel the criteria of internal validity, external validity, and neutrality/objectivity in the positivist tradition (Guba and Lincoln 1985). The holistic nature of ethnographic research should not be a substitute for a lack of transparency about data collection and, importantly, analysis. Unfortunately, studies often tend to either gloss over or report only tangentially the steps undertaken to transform the data into information. Describing the discrete phases of analysis, explaining how initial interpretations are collapsed to form inductive categories, and guiding the reader in the understanding of how meanings are constructed are essential steps to ensuring the quality of the study. To ensure that trustworthiness is preserved, a number of criteria should be fulfilled, including thick description, reflexivity, triangulation, audit, and member checking (Ybema et al. 2009, 59). A number of seminal works can be of guidance when learning about the basic foundations of ethnographic research (Van Maanen 1988), the practice of fieldwork (Jones 2014), writing field notes (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995) and ethnographic texts (Golden-Biddle and Locke 1993), and a critical reflection on the discipline (Atkinson et al. 2007).

In calling for a more sustained use of ethnographic approaches, a number of potential methodological venues could be more fully explored by future research. First, as Pollitt puts it, "more and more of the interesting questions are of a scale and complexity that require treatment by multidisciplinary teams" (2010, 293). While analysis confirms that ethnographies are, by far, an independent author journey, there is

nonetheless an interesting potential venue for collaborative ethnographies (Huby, Harries, and Grant 2011). Collaborative ethnographies could focus on the study of collective meaning making through multi-scale ethnographies. In an earlier article, Roberts and Bradley (2002, 18) called for the adoption of a systems approach in public management research. More recently, Huby and colleagues (2011) invited future ethnographic work to transcend traditional organizational boundaries. The use of multi-scale ethnographies has an established tradition in the management and sociological literature, specifically when studying the emergence of new professions (Barley 1996). In the public management and administration literature, multi-site and multi-scale collaborative ethnographies can be employed to study dispersed community action and value co-creation strategies. In doing so, future ethnographic designs could include innovative data-gathering techniques such as video and digital tools for the study of new phenomena such as online communities. Finally, while ethnography is almost unanimously conceived of as the chief method for interpretive inquiry (Yanow 2007), it can also be fruitfully employed in post-positivist epistemic approaches (Riccucci 2010) in conjunction with other methods. Indeed, as several authors have recently discussed, ethnographies can bring important added value in mixed-method studies (Bevir and Richards 2009a; 2009b; Chappell and Waylen 2013; Pollitt 2010) both for academic- and action-oriented research (Mischen and Sinclair 2009).

CONCLUSION

In advancing an ethnographic perspective, one must be mindful of the limitations of this analysis. First is the application of stringent criteria that dictated the inclusion of ethnographic studies. Future research could, for example, expand the analysis to other publication genres, including conference papers or doctoral dissertations. Second, the purpose of the analysis was to take stock of the last 25 years of research rather than provide an historical account of ethnographic approaches in the public administration and management domain (for an example of the latter approach, see Huby et al. 2011). Despite these limitations, the ultimate aim of this work was to demonstrate the value of ethnographic research for contemporary social science and to call for a deeper and more informed inclusion of ethnographic research in the methodological toolkit of public administration and management scholars.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

NOTES

1. In a few cases, these were included if additional articles explained in depth the methodology (see Mosse 2004 and Rhodes and Tiernan 2015).

2. In the United States, both the federal and state governments were included in the central government category.

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APPENDIX 1

PRISMA Checklist (Based on Liberati et al. 2009 and Tummers et al. 2015)

Section/Topic	#	Checklist item	Reported on page #
Title			
Title	1	Identify the report as a systematic review, meta-analysis, or both	14
Abstract			
Structured summary	2	Provide a structured summary including, as applicable: background; objectives; data sources; study eligibility criteria, participants, and interventions; study appraisal and synthesis methods; results; limitations; conclusions and implications of key findings; systematic review registration number	14
Introduction			
Rationale	3	Describe the rationale for the review in the context of what is already known	14–15
Objectives	4	Provide an explicit statement of questions being addressed with reference to participants, interventions, comparisons, outcomes, and study design (PICOS)	15
Methods			
Protocol and registration	5	Indicate if a review protocol exists, if and where it can be accessed (e.g., Web address) and, if available, provide registration information including registration number	NA
Eligibility criteria	6	Specify study characteristics (e.g., PICOS, length of follow-up) and report characteristics (e.g., years considered, language, publication status) used as criteria for eligibility, giving rationale	16–18
Information sources	7	Describe all information sources (e.g., databases with dates of coverage, contact with study authors to identify additional studies) in the search and date last searched	17
Search	8	Present full electronic search strategy for at least one database, including any limits used, such that it could be repeated	17

(*Continued*)

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Appendix 1
Continued

Section/Topic	#	Checklist item	Reported on page #
Study selection	9	State the process for selecting studies (i.e., screening, eligibility, included in systematic review and, if applicable, included in the meta-analysis)	17–18
Data collection process	10	Describe method of data extraction from reports (e.g., piloted forms, independently, in duplicate) and any processes for obtaining and confirming data from investigators	16–18
Data items	11	List and define all variables for which data were sought (e.g., PICOS, funding sources) and any assumptions and simplifications made	NA
Risk of bias in individual studies	12	Describe methods used for assessing risk of bias of individual studies (including specification of whether this was done at the study or outcome level), and how this information is to be used in any data synthesis	NA
Summary measures	13	State the principal summary measures (e.g., risk ratio, difference in means).	NA
Synthesis of results	14	Describe the methods of handling data and combining results of studies, if done, including measures of consistency (e.g., I) for each meta-analysis	NA
Risk of bias across studies	15	Specify any assessment of risk of bias that may affect the cumulative evidence (e.g., publication bias, selective reporting within studies)	20
Additional analyses	16	Describe methods of additional analyses (e.g., sensitivity or subgroup analyses, meta-regression), if done, indicating which were pre-specified	NA
Results			
Study selection	17	Give numbers of studies screened, assessed for eligibility, and included in the review, with reasons for exclusions at each stage, ideally with a flow diagram.	16–18
Study characteristics	18	For each study, present characteristics for which data were extracted (e.g., study size, PICOS, follow-up period) and provide the citations	17–19; Appendix 2
Risk of bias within studies	19	Present data on risk of bias of each study and, if available, any outcome level assessment (see Item 12).	NA
Results of individual studies	20	For all outcomes considered (benefits or harms), present, for each study: (a) simple summary data for each intervention group; (b) effect estimates and confidence intervals, ideally with a forest plot	NA

Synthesis of results	21	Present the main results of the review; if meta-analyses are done, include for each confidence intervals and measures of consistency	19–34
Risk of bias	22	Present results of any assessment of risk of bias across studies (see Item 15)	NA
Additional analysis	23	Give results of additional analyses, if done (e.g., sensitivity or subgroup analyses, meta-regression [see Item 16])	NA
Discussion			
Summary of evidence	24	Summarize the main findings including the strength of evidence for each main outcome; consider their relevance to key groups (e.g., healthcare providers, users, and policymakers)	34-36
Limitations	25	Discuss limitations at study and outcome level (e.g., risk of bias), and at review-level (e.g., incomplete retrieval of identified research, reporting bias)	38
Conclusion	26	Provide a general interpretation of the results in the context of other evidence, and implications for future research.	38
Funding			
Funding	27	Describe sources of funding for the systematic review and other support (e.g., supply of data); role of funders for the systematic review	NA

Note: Some checks are not applicable as they are meant for a meta-analysis, not a systematic review.

APPENDIX 2

Coding Scheme

A. Demographics
A1. Trend of published work
a.1.1. Publication Genre — Article, book, book chapter
a.1.2. Publication Date — Year of publication
a.1.3. Publication Outlet — Name of journal
A2. Authorship
a.2.1. Number of Authors — One author; two authors; three or more authors
a.2.2. Number of Articles per Author — One articles; two articles; three or more articles
B. Research Design
B1. Empirical Context
b.1.1. Geographical Location — Europe, US, and Canada; Russia, Middle East, and Asia; Africa; South America; Australia; global
b.1.2. Level of Government — Local, central (federal, state), community, international, & supranational
b.1.3. Sector of Activity — Local public services (welfare, health, security, education), public agencies, government branch (executive, legislative, judiciary), not for profit and citizens groups, other
b.1.4. Number of field sites — Single site, two sites, three sites, four or more than four sites
B2. Data collection and analysis
b.1.1 Data Collection Methods. — Interviews and focus groups, participant observation, archival sources
b.1.2. Length of fieldwork — <6 months; 6 months to 1 year; 1–2 years; 2–3 years; 3–5years; more than 5 years.
b.1.3. Data analysis — Thematic or theory-based coding, grounded theory coding, narrative and discourse analysis, other interpretive and/or mixed methods
C. Research Content
C.1. Reason for the choice of ethnography — Unveiling local meanings and interpretations, analyze the incremental and processual nature of reality, study covert social dynamics
C.2. Research Topic — Organizational behavior and change (organizational culture, work of street-level bureaucrats, work of policy elites, organizational change and innovation), collaboration and participatory governance, service and community building