

PREFACE

Not long after we met, the two of us (and a baby to be) were in London doing research. Cecilie researched public health visitors, while Iver researched diplomats. Every morning we would stack up on a full English breakfast before we hit the field. Iver spent his days in conferences and embassies interviewing people in suits about ministerial work. Cecilie spent her days in tiny offices interviewing public health visitors on everything from the spread of tuberculosis to violence against women and children. The world in which Iver spent his London days was a version of our own everyday world, writ large and dressed up. The world in which Cecilie found herself seemed to us as if it had been lifted straight out of a Charles Dickens novel. Suppers were spent discussing what we had seen, experienced and learned, and we were struck by the markedly different social realities we had participated in, although physically we had been only 5 miles or so apart. Our conversations revolved largely around the meaning of situatedness and of being situated. Which preunderstandings, emotions and prejudices are activated in the field towards the researcher, and how do these dynamics affect what the researcher sees and does not see? And if reflected upon at all, which of these reflections are reported or integrated into the final research product?

Thus were born the questions that we answer in this book: what is situatedness, how does the researcher come to be situated, how can we talk about different types of situatedness and make it relevant for our research? Here lurks a whole range of methodological problems that are

normally swept under the carpet. How can we specify and make awareness, emotions and body relevant in our data collection, in our analyses, and in the texts we write, without letting the reported research slide into a story about the researcher herself? What is at stake here, and where can we find inspiration to do this reflection-work? In this book, we use three different approaches to answering these questions. First, we specify what situatedness is. Different parts of the research process calls for different types of situatedness. Second, we provide several examples from our own research. Third, we have tried to write this text in a way that not only says what situatedness is, but also shows it.

Cecilie is not only alphabetical but also actual first author. Most of the empirical examples throughout this book are taken from her research. Thanks to Thomas Hylland Eriksen, Jane Dullum, Cathrine Egeland, Arne Johan Vetlesen and Gro Ween for useful comments and corrections and to Susan Høivik and Simone Tholens for textual assistance. Finally, a word of caution. Chapter 7, parts of which have appeared earlier in our 2015 article “Uses of the Self: Two Ways of Thinking about Scholarly Situatedness and Method” (*Millennium* 43, 3: 798–819) and are reused here with permission from SAGE Publishing, situates the book in relation to philosophy of science debates and contemporary scholarship on situatedness. Although we followed the same adage as in the other chapters, that things should be written as plainly as possible, not plainer, this chapter is still rather technical, which means that some readers who might enjoy the rest of the book, should probably just forget about that particular chapter.

Oslo, Norway, April 2017

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Power, Culture and Situated Research Methodology

Autobiography, Field, Text

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2018, VII, 115 p., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-59216-9